This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Woman's work for woman

Lovina B. Benedict

Digitized by Google

William B. Cairns Collection Of American Women Writers

1650-1920

William B. Cairns
Professor of English
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

10222
100-
105

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MOTHER BENEDICT.

Digitized by Google

WOMAN'S WORK

FOR

WOMAN.

By MOTHER BENEDICT.

She "that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoiçing, bringing" her "sheaves with" her.—PSALMS, 126-6.

DES MOINES:
IOWA PRINTING COMPANY,
1892.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Rare Books
Cairns
HQ
314
B46
1892

4759356

Dedication.

I dedicate this book, the proceeds of which are pledged to further the work of the promotion of social purity, to the women, who, in a Christ-like spirit, shall devote their energies to the emancipation of their sex, bearing aloft their banner inscribed, One Law of Purity for Man and Woman.

LOVINA B. BENEDICT.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages are written in part with a view to answering the many questions that have come from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Canada to the Gulf, in regard to "how" the present law of Iowa in reference to prostitution had been obtained; and to our success in general, in our work for the promotion of social purity. Yes, and from London (England), has come this inquiry, "I shall feel deeply thankful if you will tell us *how* you went to work, and why such a splendid law was passed in Iowa and not in the other States? I had never heard of such a law and I have been a general servant of humanity for twenty years. Such a law and its beneficent working ought to be widely known. That 'What IS, can spread' thank God, stands for *good* as well as evil. My heartfelt sympathy is with you."

Yours cordially,

MISS ELIZABETH ANN TOURNIER,

Honorary Resident Superintendent Home for Friendless Girls.

From the same hand came the following clipping from the *Sentinel* of November, 1888:

MODEL IOWA.

THE WORK OF A DAUNTLESS WOMAN.

The state of Iowa is ahead of the rest of the world in the just comprehensiveness of its law for the suppression of vice. It strikes at the right mark. It hits the visitor of a house of ill-fame. The *man sinner* is punished. By the statute the keeper, the inmate, or the *visitor* of a house of ill-fame may be sent to the penitentiary for five years. For many years, the penalty for inveigling or enticing a pure female into a house of ill-fame has been from three to ten years in penitentiary; and the legislature, several years ago, affixed the same penalty for enticing back to a

Digitized by Google

life of shame a reformed prostitute. This last clause was found necessary because of the evil efforts of Satan's emissaries to recapture the rescued ones.

Our excellent American contemporary, *The Philanthropist*, says that most of this wholesome law, and also a state refuge for the erring, have been obtained through the persevering labors of one little woman, whose first work was to enlist the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and then the legislature in interest of her mission.

"We cannot take the responsibility of opening and sustaining the refuge you desire," said the W. C. T. U. on her first application for their patronage. "You never can obtain the laws you desire, especially that which would send a man to penitentiary for visiting a house of ill-fame," was the voice of the church and the world. Yet, nothing daunted, the little woman moved on, in full assurance of faith that He, who had called her to work, was able to carry it forward, by her, to its completion; and such was her success in raising funds to perfect her plans, that, within six months, the W. C. T. U. espoused the work, and for six years have owned what is known as the Benedict Home. Here, those who need thorough reformation, are gathered in; and for those whose morals are good, save the one mis-step that has brought them into prospective motherhood, she has opened the Benedict Retreat in her own house in Decorah, Iowa; not deeming it good to associate this class with those who have gone so very far down.

The little woman found that through the legislature money could be obtained as well as law. Three times have appropriations been made from the state treasury, to help the W. C. T. U. in their rescue work, and the law that was thought, at the first, so impossible to obtain, was so gloriously given, that, while in the House there were two voices against it, there were eighty for it; and wherever it has been applied, it has produced the anticipated result, namely, the entire removal of the house of infamy. Is not this encouragement sufficient to arouse the women of England? Will not some brave, faithful handmaid of God emulate in courage, earnestness, faith, and purpose, the dauntless "little woman" of Iowa?—*Moral Reform Union, 2 Leicester Place, Bayswater.*

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

BEFORE entering upon the reading of the book, it will be well to open the door of the Retreat to its readers and let them take a view of the circumstances under which it was written. First, we will introduce them to "Mother Benedict," a small specimen of humanity nearing her seventieth year, so feeble in health that much of the time her dictation was given from her couch, while one of her *girls* acted as stenographer, thus transmitting to paper the experience of many years as it flowed almost spontaneously from the crowded storehouse of her memory, scarcely the scratch of a pen of all these years having been preserved.

The reader must not imagine "Mother Benedict" alone in quiet with her young amanuensis. But, on the contrary, see her broken in upon by, "Emma is not so well to-day;" "the work in the laundry is not being done as it should be;" "what shall we have for dinner?" and "my baby don't seem just right; what do you think ails her?" and the oft-repeated call of "mamma, can I do this?" or "can I do that?" from her darling foster treasure, Ray; and then, with his little arms about her neck, "let me kiss mamma and then I will go away and not bother her for a long time."

Add to this the responsibility of superintending the nursery, where eight little ones have opened their eyes to the light for the first time during the three months in which the pages of this book were written; and where one of our girls has lingered for weeks, and still lingers, as helpless as an infant and almost as childlike. The pale messenger of death, too, has come and claimed one of our little ones, to which

Digitized by Google

her attention is called to make all the arrangements necessary, with her own hands robing the little treasure, placing it in its coffin, then conducting the funeral exercises, closing the lid o'er the pallid face, and soothing the sorrowing mother with the promises of a glorious hope beyond. And then, too, has four times been repeated that which, to her loving mother heart, is the heaviest strain of all—that of witnessing the separation between mother and child, which comes through placing the little ones in foster homes, in which cases the young mothers, although well-nigh heart broken, yield up their sacred treasures as a duty they owe to them, as by this means they will be disconnected with their mother's disgrace and never know her sorrow.

And this is not all. Every dollar of finance must pass through her hands and her quiet is broken in upon by a rap at the door, and the coal or wood bill is presented. Or the carpenter has come and wants directions as to the work he is to do. The mason is here, and the rooms he is to plaster must be cleared. These and numberless other interruptions have so repeatedly broken in upon the time that is ordinarily sacred to the author that not at any time has there been more than fifteen minutes uninterruptedly given to the work.

It would be unjust to woman's ability to earn her own way in the world, if she is only given half a chance, not to introduce you to the young stenographer who, although still in her teens, has ability to do well her part amid all these interruptions.

And just here we are interrupted with, "——— is in a spasm." "Why, what is the matter?" "Oh, she has received another letter from her mother." Here dictation had to cease and two of the strongest girls were sent to bring the sufferer to Mother Benedict's room. Now the reader may see the kind-hearted mother make room for her on the couch beside her, take her in her arms and soothe her with the blessed promises of God through his wondrous love manifested to a fallen world in Christ Jesus. The agony of the poor girl has

Digitized by Google

been soothed and the stiffened limbs chafed back to life and action again. This painful ordeal past, dictation is again resumed, but before going farther we will give the reader a short quotation from that letter of ten pages:

> There is great preparation here for commencement. Memory carries me back to 1884 when I, too, was interested in commencement. Of that class you are the only one that has disgraced it. The rest will ever blush to own such a low, mean, degraded one as you for a classmate, as I am ashamed to own you as a daughter. Oh, shame, *shame*, SHAME. You should ever hide your head in shame. Can you ever look a virtuous person in the face again? You are mean, low, degraded.

I make but this short quotation, for the balance of the letter seems but a repetition of the same denunciations so calculated to destroy both the soul and body of the unfortunate girl who aside from the one sin gives every evidence of being a devout Christian.

Of the mother, who could write such a letter, there seems but one comment to make and that is, it is a pity for her that she could not have lived under the Mosaic law so that she could have had the privilege of seeing her daughter stoned to death, rather than under the benign rule of Him who said "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." It is this stone-casting spirit of woman toward her sister woman that the author has felt especially commissioned of the Lord to war against these many years. It is pursuant to the extermination of this lurking yet gigantic evil together with the lecherous spirit in man that the pages of this book are written. And while reference is made to otherwise noble Christian women or their names used as antagonizers of the work for the rescue of these perishing ones, it is only at this lurking foe that the author is ever aiming, while she admires and lauds the noble womanly qualities that these possess separate from this one spirit in them that is forever in one way or another barring the way of the return of the once erring one to an acknowledged and honored place in society. "Yes," responds Mother Benedict, "It pains me to the heart to pen

Digitized by Google

one word of the trials and hindrances I have had to contend with in the W. C. T. U. ranks, yet I can conceive of no other way by which the reader can get a correct history of the work, and I would ever have it kept in mind that it was only from some of those in the front ranks whose minds were too full of the cares of leadership in the other departments to give to this new department the thought that was necessary to qualify them for the leadership that they thought it their duty to exercise, that the hindrances came. While from the local unions throughout the State I received the help that made it possible to accomplish the work in behalf of whom my heart is ever bowed in gratitude to my Father in Heaven whose word to me at the first was, "Present this work through my church and carry it forward under the auspices of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Iowa."

Digitized by Google

WOMAN'S WORK FOR WOMAN.

GIVE HER A CHANCE.

In yielding to the oft repeated solicitations of my friends to write the story of my work for the fallen, it may be well to give some account of my parentage and the circumstances under which I was born. The parents who so carefully reared me until my seventeenth year were born in Ulster county, New York, and carefully reared in the Christian faith of the Quaker church, under whose sacred ceremony they were joined in marriage in the winter of 1820. At this time my mother left the home of her childhood near Newburg on the Hudson, and went with my father to his boyhood's home. Soon arrangements were made by which my grandfather came into possession of fifteen hundred acres of the woods of Ohio and decided to make it his future home with a view of settling his children about him. Thus my mother, taking leave of all her own relatives, took her journey with her husband's people, six hundred miles in the only conveyance of the times which would now be called a cumbrous lumber wagon. After a journey of six weeks through almost impenetrable forests they came to the land they had purchased "unsight, unseen." Where the woodman's ax had scarcely been heard and where the sturdiest manhood might well be appalled before the beech, the oak, the maple and kindred trees of the forest which towered far above anything which they had known in the East. Here trees were soon felled and rolled together to make a temporary house for my grandparents where my parents remained until five acres of the sturdy forest had been felled and cleared away to give place to the first sowing of the golden grain in hope of a harvest for the coming year.

Digitized by Google

So it was not until late in autumn that the sound of the ax was heard on the three hundred and fifty acres that was to be my childhood's home.

> "Where 'mid song of birds and bloom of flowers,
> Were spent so many, many happy hours."

Nearly a year had now elapsed since my dear mother left her father's house and so weary had she grown of unsettled life that she hardly waited until the rude log cabin was covered with its clapboard roof and sufficient puncheon floor laid to stand their bed upon when she commenced her housekeeping in their rude home, a mile from any inhabitant, without either door, window or chimney.

Late in the evening of the first night, as father had ceased his work hewing and laying the puncheon floor (in the framing of which the woodman's axe took the place of both saw and plane), and they were preparing to retire for the night, surrounded, as they were, by the wild men of the forest, and the still wilder bear and wolf, they were startled by a sudden growling, barking, snapping, snarling of a pack of timber wolves, which announced the fact that they had built their cabin in their favorite runway. This was no pleasant intelligence, as a quilt hung over the doorway was the only obstacle to their entrance, but my father, who had been somewhat acquainted with such unpleasant visitors in the mountains of the East, soon allayed the fears of his timid wife, for one loud halloo from the doorway silenced all but the crackling of the brush beneath their fast flying feet.

By diligent application, in the course of a few days the rude home was so far finished that the roughly constructed floor was laid, and a few stones piled up against the logs made the fireplace, and the broad opening in the roof through which the smoke curled at will, admitted the only light in their dwelling, for it was months before even a six-light window of 7x9 glass was obtained. From this rude commencement my parents were privileged to see the forests disappear

Digitized by Google

until a large, well cultivated farm yielded to them its abundance of the good things of earth, and their rude log cabin had been exchanged for a commodious dwelling. While all this had been going on, the little ones had been coming to them, one by one, to the number of four, of whom I was the second, following my elder sister so closely that there was but sixteen and one half months between us. And now, after sixty-eight years, I look back with the tenderest sympathy for my mother, as there in the midst of the forest she not only cared for the little ones, but plied her spinning wheel and loom, thus supplying almost every article of clothing and bedding. To her, surely, would apply: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." And while I am not unmindful of the labor of my father as he felled and cleared the heavy timbers in order to get at the soil, out of which to provide for his household; not forgetful of his counsel and tender care of his family; yet somehow my heart turns to my mother with an indescribable, unutterable tenderness and love because of what she bore for me.

Having thus opened my eyes to the light in the midst of the forest, where the settler could see out but one way—and that, I have often thanked God, was *straight up*—spending my years, which should have been spent in school, hunting the brown nuts, angling in the stream, wading a little deeper and climbing a little higher than my almost twin sister dared to, until I had attained the little height I ever did attain before I had the privilege of even a district school, save as occasionally my father could secure a teacher to come to our own house for a few months.

I trust the reader will regard with lenience the lack of scholarly merit in my attempt to hand down to those who come after, as much of my life's story as may be calculated to inspire them with courage to struggle with the sins of earth no matter how formidable they may seem.

Digitized by Google

Thus shut out from the written thoughts of the great and wise earth, I was alone with my own thoughts, save the Book of Books and the biographies of a few of the pioneers of my own church which composed the whole library of my father's house. Add to this, the careful Christian teaching of my parents and it is no wonder that I so early believed on the Lord Jesus as my Saviour and accepted and undertook to obey the admonitions of the gospel, that I have no story to tell of conversion, yet can tell of many battles fought, of defeats at times, and again victories, ere I at last attained that perfection of Christian life, which seemed in my very childhood, both the privilege and duty of all who professed to be followers of the Lord Jesus.

With a keen consciousness of the eye of infinite purity ever resting upon me—with an earnestness of soul to so walk at all times and in all places as to meet divine approval, the sin of impurity became to me so the sin of sins that I not only abhorred it, but had the courage to grapple with it wherever I met it, while from the depths of my soul condemnation rested on the aggressor, my sympathies, even in early childhood, were drawn out to unfortunate motherhood by the peculiar circumstances of a romance in real life that came to the daughter of an inebriate father living near my home. In his sober moments the father seemed to have pity for his unfortunate child, but, in a fit of intoxication, he drove her, with all his family from the house, and actuated by the spirit of the demon within, he kept them out all night. A cold, thus contracted, brought her to the close of her sad life, in a few days. Accompanying my mother to the funeral, the sad, sad picture of the lifeless form of the young mother and the wailing, helpless condition of the infant in a home of such squalid poverty was so stamped upon my child heart as never to be erased, The thoughts and sympathies that had their birth with this. my first knowledge of the sad consequence that come to woman through man's lust and appetite, grew with my growth and strengthened with my strength, until at the early age of

Digitized by Google

sixteen the foundation of character was laid that enabled me to stand, in after years, a wall of defense for injured womanhood and with a face of flint against the aggressive lust of manhood, when the church and the world, so accustomed to excuse the man and stone the woman, would at times come down upon me with judgment that would have crushed me but for the help of the infinite One, who had, not only chosen and fashioned me for the work, but sustained me in it.

Truly the providence of my father had not only been preparing me to fight battles for others, but for myself as well. For I was but a little past sixteen when my father, who had been to his household a tower of strength to provide for our natural wants and to protect us against the invasion of evil in every form, was suddenly stricken with the hand of disease, with which he struggled but a few days until the King of Terrors had done its work, and the heart that had so loved us was stilled in death. And our dear mother, whose health had been delicate for months previous, was so illy prepared to bear the shock that she never rallied to take an interest in anything of earth; so sister and I were suddenly called upon to meet all the responsibilities not only of our financial affairs, but to nurse day by day our slowly sinking mother, over whom we watched tenderly for seven months and then laid her beside our father. We had never known what the world was before, and the dangers to which young womanhood is exposed when there is no father or big brother for protection; but ever be praised our Father in heaven for His providence which interposed to our relief in the persons of two young farmers, who proffered themselves as our protectors and the sharers of our joys and sorrows through life. Thus safely sheltered myself under a husband's loving care, I soon found a field of labor foreshadowing that which became my life work, "woman's work for woman"—extending a voice of warning to those likely to get into trouble through man's lust, and uplifting and shielding from the cold criticisms of the world those who had been victimized. I had not

Digitized by Google

yet attained nineteen years when I came into close contact with the enemy of all good, in the person of a very fine looking gentleman, as to the *outward*, but a fiend and a seducer at heart. He had professed conversion at a revival meeting, and was thus brought into close contact with several young and beautiful girls in whom I was deeply interested. By looking to the Lord for aid and guidance, I was soon able to break the spell and help those young and innocent ones to see him—monster as he was—and to bar him from their society.

My twenty-third year was marked by the coming, and my twenty-fourth by the departure of our first child. Here are volumes spoken in a few words. An experience of the *depths* of *mother love*, and of the *agony* of a *mother bereft*. While crushed beneath this weight of mortal woe, I first heard the voice of the Spirit's call to the ministry of the gospel. Having, from my birth, a membership in the church that recognizes woman as man's equal in every department of work, I was privileged to exercise the gift that God had bestowed upon me, and notwithstanding the narrow limits of my education save in the school of Christ, I ventured to obey.

In my twenty-sixth year I was first called to stand in the presence of the suffering of maternity where the young mother was not a wife. Although all her surroundings were antipodes to Christianity, as I presented the little one to the young mother of only sixteen years (and she a cripple in both her feet), this came to me to say to her, it must have been by the Spirit, "Samantha, all that is sinful, and all that is shameful, is past. The blood of Jesus alone can pass upon that. The honorable part remains to be done. Take this child, be a mother to it and raise it for the Lord as best thou canst." I never think of the seed sown with such improbable surroundings without thinking of its likeness to the handful of corn planted on the top of a mountain, for, as the years went by, the fruit of this seed sowing was alike wonderful. As I was then about to leave my native State, ten years passed

Digitized by Google

ere again I saw the crippled girl. She had now grown to noble womanhood, was a member of the Presbyterian church, had learned the tailor's trade, and was thus enabled to do much toward the support of her boy and to indeed "raise him for the Lord." After a lapse of twenty-five years I again visited my native place, and inquiring after one and another that I had known in earlier days, my thoughts fell on Samantha. "Oh, what about her?" when I was quickly answered, "Samantha? Why, she is the honored mother in the good home of that son of hers. She gave her life to the rearing of her child. He gives her the honored place in the home of his manhood."

I mention this, and the fact of the nobleness of character of a young man and a young woman of my acquaintance from childhood, who, although of illegitimate birth, stood above the average of their surroundings, as incidents which drew me aside from the common thought, that degradation is a natural consequence of illegitimate birth.

It might be well to introduce the reader to some of the training that in the providence of my Father had been mine in the school of finance. First, as sister and I were the counselors of our husbands in meeting the burden of financial embarrassment that rested upon our father's estate, the settling of which we with them became responsible for, without being at a dollar's expense through the channel which the law provides, by giving our joint note on every claim on such time as would enable our young husbands to raise the means from out the soil wherewith to settle all accounts. Thus not only our share of our father's estate, but that of our young brother and sister was cleared from all embarrassment by the time they were of legal age, so that we could settle with each other by dividing the estate into equal parts and quit-claim to each other at the cost of fifty cents apiece.

Thus under the guiding hand of our Father, to whom we ever looked, we were enabled to accomplish a settlement in affairs so complicated as in the course of law would have put

Digitized by Google

us to a cost of hundreds. We were often admonished while carrying this responsibility that our brother or sister might be so dissatisfied when they attained their majority as to make us a great deal of trouble and cost, to which my answer invariably was, "That which my parents have so toiled for and left is too sacred for us to give to lawyers but to my young brother or sister, should they be dissatisfied, we are ready to give all that they require to satisfy them."

This difficulty, however, we never had to meet. And again, in after life when through unforeseen circumstances our finances became so involved as to lead my dear husband to seek the counsel of some of the most able brethren of our church, which, by the way, is a rule of our discipline, who having come to understand the situation of our affairs, unhesitatingly advised him to make an assignment. This counsel was asked and received without my knowledge, as he was worrying most of all over the fact that that which we had to start with in life came from my father's estate, and in this case all would be gone, for we should never be able to pay every man his own, and the circumstance too, of its being but a few months previous to the birth of our youngest child, combined to make it all the more trying to make known to me what he was about to do. But, notwithstanding, the great trial it was to him to convey this fact to me, it had to be done, as the assignment could not be made without my signature. I knew full well that our affairs were in a precarious condition and the business having been entered into, not really according to my judgment at the first, but with a tacit consent. Yet, when I was informed of the counsel he had received and the arrangements that had been made for one of his counselors to take him to the county seat next day preparatory to making an assignment, it came almost like a death blow. And yet, it took me but a moment to say, "give me a little time alone with the Lord," and it was but a few short moments till I received, in such an assurance of faith, the instructions that our duty was to make no assignment, but to go on managing our own

Digitized by Google

affairs and all should come out well, that I was able to return this answer, "we will never do it. For in doing so our affairs will be tied up. Those that do business for us will have to be paid for it and we will only make matters worse. I believe we are yet as capable of managing for ourselves and certainly could do it better while we are at perfect liberty to do so. There is not a mortgage on anything that we have got, and I am sure that we shall be able to sell off and satisfy our creditors in due time." "But what," said my dear husband, "shall I say to those friends who have advised me?" I said, "simply tell them that I am not willing, and I will bear all the censure that comes down upon me." This was, however, easier said than done, for I must confess that I felt keenly the frowns of those legal guardians of woman's person and property as rather by looks than words they admonished me that my course was nigh to that of usurpation seeing that I was but a woman.

Thus reassured, my discouraged husband took up the work anew, relieved at least in the assurance that I had given to him that should we lose all, I could bear it better if my counsel was acted upon in losing it. But, praised be the Lord, whose promises are "yea and amen," for the assurances that I received in the few moments alone with Him, were so verified that instead of having to make a dividend to our creditors, as we should inevitably have had to do in case of an assignment, we paid every man his own and saved a thousand dollars with which to start anew.

This financial embarrassment and the loss sustained in it was among the providences that lead to our taking leave of our native State and making Iowa our home, which became to me as thoroughly the state of my adoption that as I viewed the question of social purity or rather social impurity and the awful consequences of State regulated vice in the old world and saw the monster invading and clamoring for establishment in the eastern States, and already the deadly baits of the hydra-headed monster were being planted in every town and

Digitized by Google

hamlet of the western and younger States, it lead me to feel that the sacrifice of my life would be but a thing of inconsiderable value compared with being the instrument in the hand of the Lord to prevent so dire a calamity ever overtaking the young and fair State of Iowa.

Although my lack of education in many ways was very humiliating to me in this work, I had to come in contact with the best educated women of the State, yet, for the one thing which I had undertaken to do, I found by experience that the providences of my life, and the way by which my father had led me, had given me an education that so far surpassed theirs that I some times feared I should become vain of my attainments; for not only their understanding of the work, but their regard for each individual fallen one was so far below mine that they seemed to be only taking their first lessons in the school, in that which, if allowed to do its necessary work, would transform them from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet. But this lack in woman of kindly feeling toward the unfortunate and erring I had been accustomed to meet from time to time that I dared at the first to stretch forth my hand for their help, the common verdict ever being: "It is no use to spend time on that case;" "you will never be able to make that girl any better;" "she has gone too far." While my thought ran in harmony with the poet when he said:

> "Calling men bad, calling things bad, is of little Christian use;
> One soft word of kindly meaning is worth torrents of abuse."

I had proven too many times the contrary of all their assertions by seeing the ministration of love and kindness have its perfect work, until the object that was thus denounced was lifted from the mire and placed upon the "Rock" and her redeemed life in womanly virtue so thoroughly established as to admit of no doubt or wavering on my part however much I or those for whom I was giving my life might be denounced. But while all my powers were thus dedicated to

Digitized by Google

the Lord, and I was making no reserve, but that my life should be a Christ life seeking the lost ones, I must admit that my human nature at times suffered like to the burning fiery furnace, heated one seven times hotter than it was wont, as the judgment of the church and the world came down upon me. The one thing above all others in which I was counted as either a knave or a fool was that I would give the benefit of the doubt to worthy and intelligent girls who claimed entire innocence and ignorance of the how or where or when they had been brought into prospective motherhood. This to my judges was surely a falsehood, and I either was so weak as to be entirely misled by the unfortunates, or else I knew all about it and was so unjust and untrue as to help them pass their deception off upon the world. Although so deeply depressed by these stern judgments of the church and of the world as at times to lead me to exclaim :

> "Hide me, oh oblivion, hide,
> Me from the world's cold frown;
> Bear me on thy turbid tide
> To the unknown regions down."

But yet, putting on strength in the name of the Lord, I would stand firm and say, "Where you sink that poor orphan girl you may sink me, for I shall stand by her." And, as the years have rolled by and I have noted the lives of pure womanhood and motherhood of those for whom I had made such sacrifice, I have, from year to year, thanked God and taken fresh courage and buckled on the armor anew for the work. The opposite extreme was my interest in those so low down as to become common prostitutes and inmates of houses of ill-fame. The many years that have elapsed have not obliterated from my memory the experience that I had soon after Decorah became my home. I had been in attendance on a District Sabbath School Convention, and we had had a blessed good time as we always do when we thus meet together in the interest of the little ones who belong to the Kingdom. I had come home very happy, full of resolutions

Digitized by Google

for future faithful service for the Lord. On taking my seat in our prayer meeting the next evening after my return, the voice of the Spirit seemed to say to me, "Thou hast just had a blessed good time at that convention, and hast come home very happy, but now there is work to do and hard work, and if thou failest to do it, thy stream of joy shall be cut off." This so filled my mind with wonder and surprise as to what this could mean, what the work could be that was before me, as to almost divert my attention from the services of the meeting, but at its close, a lady announced to me the startling fact that there was a house of ill-fame recently opened within a stone's throw of my house.

In an instant the word was, "That is the work." Then came the inquiry, "My Father, how am I to go about it? How shall I approach the inmates of that house? I am in possession of no legal testimony against them, and they are entire strangers to me." The answer seemed to come, "Go to some well established Christian woman of the place and ask her to accompany thee to make a call at that house just as late as would seem at all in propriety to call on a stranger." As I cast about in my mind to whom I could go with this request, the thought came, that as I was a minister of the Friend's church, it would be but right that I should go to the wife of one of the ministers of one of the churches here, which I did. But as I made known my errand, how was I shorn of the little strength I had for the work as she met me with, "It is no use. They know better; might do better. It will do no good to go and see them, beside I could not think of anything like that."

She shrank back and back until the work seemed so appalling as to almost crush me through the pavement as I stepped out from her dwelling. But she, seeing my determination to carry on the work, and yet the deep distress I felt under it, said, "Well, you go and do the work, and I will pray for you." I replied, "The prayer that is not of faith, what is it?" I did not say it was sin. I thought she knew what the Book

Digitized by Google

said, and left her to think of it. But I had moved on but a few steps under this crushing weight until there appeared a sort of panorama before me. On one side of the street was a grand array—high-priest, scribes, pharisees and the able Sanhedrin of Judea; on the other moved the despised Man of Nazareth and His humble followers, and they were to me an humble looking company; and it seemed to me I could see the proud look of scorn on the faces of those able judges, with the sarcastic query, "What will that despised company ever do in this world?" Then came the blessed text, "The servant is not greater than his Lord," and in an instant, as I recognized myself as a servant of the despised Man of Nazareth, the crushing weight and pressure was so lifted that it seemed to me my feet barely touched the pavement as I hastened on toward the home of a dear Methodist sister, not a minister's wife, but a saint and mother in Israel, and on making known to her my errand, she said, "I will go."

So we made our appointment and went in company to make our call in the summer twilight. As we rapped at the door the keeper of that terrible bait of vice came out very bland and apologizing, said: "I would invite you in, but then Mike is in there." "Oh," I said, "and who is Mike?" "Why he is a man that my husband sent up to take charge of us as he is a boatman on the Mississippi and could not come with us. I have been having ague and came up here a short time ago for my health. There are just myself and hired girl, and the men of your city hang around our house so nights that my husband sent Mike up to protect us." "The men of our city hang around your house nights, and you two innocent women just here for your health? Why, I am astonished out of measure. I have lived here now for some months. Sister Gregg has lived here longer and men have never hung around our houses, and I am sure that they wouldn't around yours if they thought we were with you, and now we offer you our protection. We will come and stay with you until it is so late that those bad parties will be at home and in bed. We

Digitized by Google

can pass the time, I am sure very profitably and pleasantly. We will bring our Bibles, yes, and our hymn books too, for our sister here is a beautiful singer." And so we talked at considerable length until after the usual bed time, and yet as we moved out from the house, and could look back there was a knot of men around one corner and boys around the other watching, as we understood it, and waiting for our departure. One young fellow had come up so near that I had but just to step a little off the sidewalk to come right upon him. He, doubtless thinking me one of the inmates of the house, allowed me to come directly up to him, but as I announced, "I am Lovina Benedict," and inquired, "who is this?" He stammeringly answered, "It is somebody," and began to back off. I then said, "Somebody had better be getting toward home quickly," and he did move quickly in the direction of his home and was soon out of sight.

So ended our experience for the first night, but now we had an appointment and ventured to go a little later and take a re-inforcement with us, so that we were quite a little company gathered up for a prayer meeting as we entered the yard. But the woman who was so bland the night before came out and confronted us, ere we had time to come to the door, showing an angry face, saying she had been imposed upon and her house was no place to come to to pray and sing, there were churches for that. But when she was through with her speech, I, as my custom was, did not fail to make mine, reminding her of her professed innocence and the Christian protection we had offered her, the Christian counsel we had given her, the consequences of her despising and going contrary to the counsel that would guide her feet in the path of virtue, and measuring off to her the steps by which she was going down, and what the final conclusion and windup of such a life on earth must mean to all eternity. While we were so lingering the night before poor Mike was left alone in the dark, but this evening, having arrived later, the house seemed to have been well filled and well lighted previous to our coming,

Digitized by Google

and we could stand there in the presence of that abode of vice and but conjecture as to whose sons and whose daughters of the people of Decorah might be reveling in the debauchery inside. But, having fulfilled the mission in giving both counsel and warning, I felt that my work was done, although it was not only in the conjecture of who was inside, but there was a dozen or more of the boys of our city, ranging from fourteen to eighteen or twenty years, waiting but a little way off, for us to retire ere they plunged into the same bait of vice. The next night, as I lay my head upon my pillow, this short prayer burst from my lips: "Oh God! remove them this night in some way." I did not prescribe the way nor would I, perhaps, have quite approved it if I had known of the shower of eggs that was administered during the night by some of the better men of the place who had been stimulated to supplement our effort for the removal of the trying evil in a way very different from that we would have prescribed. But whether in the right way or in the wrong way the work was done, and they took the first train and we never heard of them afterward. It was then there came a voice to me whispering "where hast thou driven them to?" This started me out on a new train of thought. Up to this time I had counted it always a victory when I had succeeded in a removal and had come to say that when I brought my two batteries, prayer and works, to bear upon them, by perseverence I was sure of success. This was my first identification with this sort of work in Decorah. And yet I had had an experience some months before that identified me with the erring.

Having become almost a miraculous healer in the eyes of some of my Catholic neighbors, because of the success that I had had in ministering to some of the sick among them I was pathetically appealed to in behalf of an only child, a little girl of four whom the doctors had given up to die, the parents fondly hoping that my ministration to the child might be blessed to its restoration. But, on entering the humble dwelling and noting the condition of their treasure, I felt it

Digitized by Google

right to tell them plainly that it was past all hope, that death was then doing its work. At this announcement cutting off their last gleam of hope, they gave themselves up to such wild demonstrations of grief as to cause an old lady sitting by to interrupt them with this exprssion: "There is a greater sorrow than this. You know the condition that I have been in many months, over a missing daughter. I have one lying up here in the cemetery. I know where she is to-night. But, oh, over the other who is out in this wicked world, and I know not where, I have been well nigh bereft of my reason." Up to this moment all the soul of my being was going out in sympathy to the parents who were watching above their dying child. It was all they had, and I knew too well what it meant to part with all not to give to them the deepest sympathy that I was capable of feeling. But, as I listened to the old woman's sad story, that depth of sympathy was so transferred from the parents who were watching the departure of the pure spirit of their darling, to the mother sorrowing over her lost one, as to give me to feel that the fond father and mother might gladly hand up their little one to the care of the angels and thank God for the privilege, rather than take the place of the mother whose daughter's whereabouts she could not find. And from that hour every remembrance of that mother and her missing daughter was a prayer that the lost one might be returned to her mother, and that she might again take her place in the church and in the world from which she had fallen. I made some effort in my travels in response to the mother's urgent request to seek and find her daughter, but all in vain.

But ere two years had elapsed, in the midst of revival services in our city, a lady called my attention, and, pointing to a girl sitting quite alone said, "There sits that girl for whom you have been praying so long." The sermon closed and the workers in the church were called upon, as usual, to go through the audience and talk to those whom they deemed in need of salvation. I, not knowing but that it was just the

Digitized by Google

thing to do to work as I prayed, went directly to the subject of my prayers, and, sitting down by her, I began to tell her the story of where I first met her mother, and learned of what she was suffering over her missing daughter, and that from that hour every remembrance of her had been a prayer. And ere the call came for penitents to come forward, the tears were streaming down her cheeks and such evidence given of true penitence that I said to her, as seekers were going to the altar, "Why not go right now and renew that broken covenant?" She needed but one invitation and rose immediately. I followed and was glad to kneel with her at the altar and there, in her hearing, to pour out the burden of my soul that had been going up to the Father of Mercies for her from the first moment I learned her sad history. But my quiet confidence in having done just the thing I ought to do was wonderfully disturbed as the meeting closed and the minister said to me, "Oh, Mrs. Benedict, you have made a fearful mistake," and the mothers of the church responded, "You have made a fearful mistake in bringing that girl to the altar; Mrs. Such-a-one has come to the altar and Mrs. Such-a-one and they will not come again if that girl comes. You must tell her that she must not come to the altar again."

I was not in my own church, but from past experience with my own in their lack of faith and love in their care for this class of sinners, I am sure I would not have fared any better, and felt therefore that I must accept the rebuke I had received and was under obligations to carry out the directions. But, oh, how was I surprised; for I really thought it safer to venture, as I had done, in a Methodist revival than even in my own church, for I had always considered that church held the most wide open arms to take back the backslider or take in a sinner on probation of any church in existence. And I still think that it is, and was then, but this was a sinner of *the* class over whom it was a foregone conclusion that "she is too polluted to have any recognition anywhere," not even in the Christ-hand being extended to lead her to the

Digitized by Google

cleansing fountain of the all availing blood of Jesus. But how could I do as I was bidden? How could I tell that poor young girl that the church would not receive her back? I had told her at the first that she had been out in the world among sinners and had been wounded, and now her place was among Christian people, and they knew the power of the cleansing blood of Jesus, and in His love they knew how to forgive her and give her an opportunity to start again.

But now I was bidden to a duty that would cut down between Christ and the church. I must tell her still that God for Christ's sake would forgive her, and that the precious blood of Jesus would cleanse her, but that the church said she must not come to the altar again. I cannot tell how heavy this duty was to me or with what reluctance I performed it, but in doing it I received still greater evidences of true penitence and willingness to bear any humiliation so that she might but regain the place she had lost. As I told her that the minister and mothers of the church said she must not came to the altar again, she replied that, "ere I went astray, my father being hard of hearing, we always occupied the seat just back of the mourners' bench. I will go there." "Well," I replied, "then I will go there too." And the next evening, true to her promise, when the invitation was given to come forward, she took her seat alone in the proposed place, but I was not long in taking mine beside her. So when we knelt in prayer for the penitent, she and I had our little altar by ourselves. But, as soon as the service was over, I was again waited on and informed that that was an outsider's seat and he would be offended if that girl sat there. At this objection I was rather delighted than otherwise for I knew that outsider. I knew the spirit of the man and the ordeal that had enlarged his heart, for it had been his to be prostrate and dependent for many years, and for more than a year of which time my husband and I had given place to his couch in our room and ministered to him as though he had been our born brother. So with confidence I carried my suit to him and

Digitized by Google

received just such a reply as I confidently expected, which was, "*She shall* sit there." I made my report, but the rightful guardians of the cause of Christ on earth were not to be foiled in this, for the next night when the call came to penitents to go forward, and the good, old hymn was being sung:

"Come ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore,
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power."

There was a committee of the mothers of the church in the aisles to see to it that the girl did not get forward even to the seat to which she was so welcomed by the outsider. But one of the mothers, more vigilant than the rest, did not let the matter stop here. But the next morning at the usual Sabbath service, she stationed herself in the entry waiting the coming of the mother of the unfortunate girl (who, by the way, was a member in equally as good standing in the church as herself), whom she informed that she must not allow her daughter to come to meeting any more. Of this I was apprised on coming home from Sabbath school held at the close of the meeting by being inquired of by my children, "Why mother, what is the matter with Mother Shiner? She was here crying and in such great distress and wanting to see thee." I took a hasty dinner and repaired to the humble abode to find the old people and their erring child in almost utter despair. But calming them as best I could by quotations from the blessed Word, I knelt with them in prayer, and if ever I was allowed to come near the mercy seat it was there and then. As I rose the old lady had become composed and went on to tell me the story of her daughter's error. That she had been seduced by the son of one of the church members living right here in the city who was walking the streets in his broadcloth and recognized by everybody, and who, on learning of her daughter's prospective motherhood, persuaded her to hide herself in an institution not of Christian influence for the preservation of the young life and that of the mother, but a

Digitized by Google

place where measures were taken for the destruction of one at the risk of both. But ere the work of destruction was done they had received the intelligence of her whereabouts and were about to go to her rescue when her seducer, divining their intent, removed her to another State where, during the remaining months of her absence from home, she had given birth to, and was caring for, his child under promise (a promise which, however, was never redeemed) that if she would keep it a secret he would give her $500. And that the child was now sick, and the old people in whose home it was born and in whose home she had left it had written urging her return, but she was not in possession of means sufficient to pay her fare. On receiving this intelligence my plans were soon laid as just the thing to do, which was to go to the church members and say to them, "You do not want this girl to attend these meetings, and I think it will be well for her to be just as far away from the church as we can well send her that she may forget, if possible, the treatment she has received. And there is a place where, in my judgment, she ought to go and go at once, but she has not the means to go. Now I extend my hand to you for help in the direction of the wherewith to pay her fare." Having by this means secured the necessary amount, I sent her to the dear old people who had so kindly sheltered her in the hour of her extremity, and who were now so desirous of her presence to aid them in the care of her sick child.

Thus, the church being relieved of the burden of so great a sinner, seeking peace and pardon at its altar, went on with its meetings undisturbed, while I was taking close note of what its harvest should be, and was not at all surprised that it amounted to almost nothing, neither of the prominent ladies being gathered whose presence at the altar was urged as a reason why the poor unfortunate girl should not be allowed to come, who, by the way, had not been half so great a sinner as she was accused of being, for during her many months from home she had been simply taking care of her

Digitized by Google

own child instead of being an inmate of a brothel as the church and world had been so ready to believe. Thus foiled in her first attempt to regain her place in the church, I do not know whether she ever again attempted it, but I do know that she returned to her father's house a year and a half later, from which she was honorably married and has since lived a respectable life.

Dwelling under the power of the cleansing blood of Jesus, and sustained from day to day by the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit, my faith in the foundation stone of the Christian religion was not at all disturbed by this action of the church, but memory carries me back to a time, in the struggle in my own church in the early part of my defense for the unfortunate, when it was so far disturbed that I remember on one occasion of mentally exclaiming, "*Is* there a God that cares for human suffering?" But having passed on from victory to victory and being favored to see such blessed fruits of my labor, I was by this time too firmly established. But not so with my son, yet in his teens, whose sympathies were naturally with his mother, and who was thus led to criticise the action of the church, which developed in a parody on the "Little church 'round the corner," one stanza of which I vividly remember. After having expressed with what open arms the church would have received the seducer, had he bowed at the altar, he says:

> "But the woman who fell, must go down to hell,
> With no help from the little church on the corner."

Seed thus sown germinated and finally brought forth the ripened fruit of unbelief. Having witnessed this effect on my only son the reader surely will not wonder that I closely criticise any action of the church that touches the foundation principles of the gospel which is "The blood of Jesus will cleanse" or it wont. He either "has power to save to the uttermost" all that come to God by him or he has not.

The reader will hardly suppose that I passed through all this conflict without expressing to the sisters of the church

Digitized by Google

my views in regard to the power of Jesus' blood to cleanse, and the duty of his embassadors in the church of presenting it to the world not only by word, but by deed and in very truth. I gained at least one convert, for the very sister who was foremost in the defense of the honor of the church and against the unfortunate girl, was so changed in thought in regard to her duty to the fallen that she was the one who so quickly responded to my request, and with me proffered her protection to the seemingly innocent and yet the very guilty keeper of the den of infamy told of in the preceding narrative.

I had some evidence, too, that the pastor was also converted for years afterwards, as he introduced me to the congregation in his church, in another part of the state, he told the story in touching pathos, of the sincerity of the girl and of the blessing that he believed she received at the altar, notwithstanding her rejection by the church.

One morning as in my wonted feeble health I was trying to struggle through with my week's washing, a neighbor called telling me that there were two women lying at the point of death in a house of ill-fame in the suburbs of our little city, and begging me that I would go and see them as application had been made to the pastor's wife to go and minister to their spiritual necessities, but she had refused, thinking it too low a place for her to enter.

Already weary with the task I was trying to accomplish, and which was now but half done, I thought at first, "It was impossible, I cannot walk the intervening distance," which was readily measured by the eye as the place designated, a rudely constructed house that had been thrown together in haste a short time before, in full view of our dwelling. But, as I reflected that perhaps I was the only woman in the city who would deign to carry to such an abode the blessed message of the gospel, I decided that feeble as my strength was, duty said, "make the effort." So turning to the stalwart woman who so interested herself in behalf of my visiting

Digitized by Google

them, I said, "If thou wilt but lend me thy strong arm to lean upon, I will try to walk the distance," not dreaming that I should find in that abode of vice any one that I had ever met before. On entering I found the sufferers occupying opposite corners of the same room. The keeper of the house, a woman of some twenty-five years, being one of them and lying upon a bed in one corner, while a young girl of seventeen occupied a couch in the opposite corner. On the floor beside the suffering girl lay her sister who had gone much farther on the road that leads to eternal death than herself. On a straw mat near the keeper of the house lay her mother who had not only willfully deserted her husband, the church, and all that was pure, and had chosen instead a prostitute's life, but had led her own daughter down also. But bad as was this sinful mother there was still feeling left, for on her waking and seeing me in the room, she immediately recognized me and came weeping and wringing her hands and saying, "Do go and talk to my daughter. Do pray for her. She was once a good Christian girl, but that is all past now, for she has said, 'Mother, I am going right down to hell, and you are the cause.'" I complied with her request, then turned my attention to the young girl whose sister awoke at my approach and soon another sister came in, through whom I found that I was not a stranger to them in that terrible abode, for they called my attention to the meetings that I had held in a country neighborhood, and to a feeble Christian woman whose acquaintance I made there, saying, "She is our mother." At this intelligence I found there something for me to do in the way of securing some respectable place to which I could carry the apparently dying young girl ere the intelligence of the condition of the daughter could be safely borne to her feeble mother. I set about the work, rapping at Christian doors, making my selections according to my judgment as to whether the family was so situated as to render it a prudent thing for them to take an inmate from such a place, even though she was not able to lift her head

Digitized by Google

from her pillow. In this exercise of judgment, my own house was barred by the fact of my own son and daughter being yet in their teens and our means of support coming largely from keeping young men boarders. So I started on my errand of mercy, begging shelter at the homes of old people where there were no younger members to contaminate, or at the door of young Christians where there were no children, or at least, if there were, too young to be in any way contaminated. But in this search I utterly failed to find shelter. As I said at the first I had an excuse why I could not take her to my home, so alike I found excuses at every Christian door to which I applied.

Finding our religion too much of the priest and Levite order to admit of the touch of such pollution and after having walked a part of three days, all that my feeble health would admit of, I turned in my pursuit to the good Samaritans of the city and readily found an open door. The next thing was how best to convey the feeble sufferer to the proffered shelter. Concluding that I would have to take her on her couch just as she was, I called men off the street to assist me in the work which they were ready to do as I planned the way. After carefully covering the young sufferer so that she might not be exposed to any cold on the way, I directed her couch carried out into the yard. And then two poles were selected from a pile that chanced to be near at hand, and directed one placed under each end by which four men were able to easily carry her, although it was a distance of some dozen blocks. Having accomplished my object and seeing the girl comfortably situated in her new quarters, and having allowed her due time to rest I began carefully to inquire into the cause of her illness and learned that a certain physician had been guilty in the matter both as to the endangering of her life and that of the woman of the house, and that the old mother had been their counselor, and also had persuaded the physician to undertake to destroy young life at the risk of theirs. Having gained the particulars in this matter, my being so clamored for justice that I was ready at once to file

Digitized by Google

information with the district attorney. Her physicians coming in just then, I told them my purpose. They said they were very ready to assist me and would take me in their carriage to his office, on the way telling me that at their first visit they had gained all the facts that had just been revealed to me and had them in writing with the signatures of the sufferers, not being willing to attend them as physicians without the statements of these facts lest *their* honor might be called into question. Thus encouraged by the M. D.'s who were not willing to file the information themselves because they were of the same craft, I sought the office of the district attorney and not knowing just where to find it, I inquired of the first man I met if he could point it out to me. On learning why I sought the officer's presence he kindly said, "I will accompany you."

This was a comfort and a support as he too was a man of the law and had been at one time a judge in our county. The information thus filed was soon acted upon and the guilty party arrested and thrown in jail, but was admitted to bail a short time after under $500.00 bonds. Here we will leave this criminal in the hands of the law and turn again to the sufferer whom I visited daily. On my next visit to the young girl I met her mother, and, oh! how well was I paid for the labor I had bestowed upon her daughter by the often reiterated "God bless you" showered down upon me by that loving, Christian mother. While the young girl lingered on without any apparent change, the woman who had, in truth, been her seducer, was fast going down to death. But bad as she had been, she was not beyond the power of redeeming grace and the cleansing blood of Jesus, if death bed testimony can be at all relied upon. It was my privilege, as I continued to visit her to hear her bear witness to the power of God in Christ Jesus, saying that through Him she had sought and found pardon, and not only in this did I receive convincing testimony, but in the able counsel that she gave to her friends, as she called them to her one by one to take leave of them, which

Digitized by Google

surpassed anything that it had ever been my privilege to hear even from the death bed of a Christian of years of experience, especially as she addressed her unbelieving husband, commencing just where I have always found it best to commence with the unbeliever. "You know you are in the practice of things your intelligent judgment condemns." And as she gave him charge concerning their little two year old daughter, her voice raised until it could be heard in the street as she said: "Teach her there is a God, put her in a Christian family where she will have the privilege of the church and sabbath school." After all the assurance that I had thus received that the sin-sick prodigal had been received back into the arms of the Father and clothed in the robes of Christ's righteousness, and admitted to a mansion in glory, the reader will not be surprised that I was shocked some years later, on meeting the wife of the pastor who conducted the funeral services of this one that was lost, to hear her say, turning to a lady present, "Ha, ha, ha, there is Mother Benedict. I know her and what her work is. She is always looking after fallen womanhood. My husband was pastor of the church in her city for three years and we had some most desperate cases of that character, and some of them got sick and they came for me to go and see them, but I sent them to Mrs. Benedict. One of them died, and don't you believe that they called on my husband to conduct the funeral services, and I just told him not to head that procession through town." To this I exclaimed, "Oh! dear woman, are you not afraid you will meet that woman in heaven?" And as I went on giving her the benefit of the preceding narrative, her countenance changed, the expression of laughter had gone and that of serious, fearful meditation taken its place, and my prayer was that the fear, begotten in the heart, and so expressed in the face, might never cease until healed by the perfect cure of that love to God which expresses itself in love to our fellow men.

By the foregoing, and similar experiences, I was step by step being educated to the thought that in my efforts for the

Digitized by Google

uplifting and reformation of the unfortunate and erring I was only doing a sort of retail business while the enemy was working at wholesale, sowing broadcast the seed of immorality throughout the length and breadth of our commonwealth. But thought would keep on thinking as to the, what, that must be done in order to lay the ax at the root of the deadly upas that was poisoning and blighting the fairest of our land. As I was becoming more and more acquainted with these dens of infamy as the adjunct to, or rather the twin sister of the saloon, I came to query, "What are we of the W. C. T. U. of Iowa doing for this class? While we are banded together as avowed opponents of the saloon, ought we not to take in the brothel as well?" And I began occasionally to hint it to our sisters as in our weekly meetings we came together to execute and lay plans for future work. At the very outset I was given both by words and actions to understand that I was bringing before them that which was by far too low for their consideration. But I was forced to entertain it, for in the night season the voice of the Spirit was continually prompting me to the urgent necessity of immediate action in the direction of closing those schools of vice where in the presence of womanhood reft of all womanly graces the youth of our land are being educated to so under-value woman's virtue as to consider seduction a mere joke. And by manhood thus educated, our daughters are being seduced and in the hour of their extremity seeking the brothel, the only shelter open to them, to become, in their turn, the seducers of the oncoming youth of our land, thus furnishing a continual round and round of ever widening, ever increasing evil. It was thus in this silent communion with the Teacher of teachers, that the plan was given as to what should be done and how to do it. But amid the cares of my own household that hardly admitted of one hour's remittance from daily toil save that which the rest of sleep required, and with not a dollar to advance in the direction of what seemed to me the first step to be taken, a Christian shelter for the seduced and a refuge for the sin-sick prostitute. "What could I do?"

Digitized by Google

And how often my cry had gone up to my Father in heaven, "Oh! why roll this burden upon me? Why not upon some woman who has means to prosecute the work?" But he who "moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform," had His plan in which, as His servant, it was but mine to be the passive instrument as He made the way. And, as when He committed to me the gospel message, He first felled me to the earth with a stroke of his hand that well-nigh took my life, in the death of my first born, so, now, He proved me closer by his seemingly severer blow in the sudden taking to Himself of the partner of my life, leaving me so desolate that the severest form of labor was joy compared with waiting hour by hour the days and years go by ere the time of reunion in that better country should come. And so steadily did I follow the guiding of His providences in the work of the rescue of these perishing ones, and so was my life pledged to and identified with the work, that the sun had not gone down on the day that my husband's sacred remains were committed to the grave, ere I was called upon, by the urgent pleading of a Christian sister, to go quickly to the rescue of a little four year old girl whose mother was keeping a house of prostitution in our midst. So early the next morning I did my first work in my stricken condition without, however, being able to secure the child at that time. But following up the case, never giving up as my motto is, where there is a soul concerned, never give up until the last thing is done that it is in my power to do, after four years' vigilant but vain effort to reclaim the mother my labors were richly rewarded by seeing this sinful mother safely housed in our penitentiary and the little one placed in our industrial school and beyond the reach of the profligate mother. The death of my husband seemed to bring to a close the necessity of my being any longer engrossed in the cares of house-keeping as my son and daughter were now grown and in business for themselves. So there was seemingly no reason why I should not carry out the plan that had been given me, which was to gain the co-operation of the W.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MOTHER BENEDICT. AS SHE STARTED FORTH ON HER MISSION. WITH ONLY HER FAITH AND HER BIBLE.

Digitized by Google

C. T. U. and under its auspices to go through the State, and from the platform and sacred desk awakening an interest in raising higher the standard of purity both for men and women, calling the attention both of the church and the world to our duty in regard especially to fallen womanhood, and the same time soliciting means to provide a way by which she might return. Pursuant to this, I watched for every opportunity to speak a word in interest of the work to which I apprehended I was called of the Lord.

For the purpose of bringing this subject before the ministers and more prominent members of the Methodist church, I visited Clear Lake, arriving there so near the close of their summer camp meeting that there was but one more meeting to be held on the ground, which, at my request was granted me. Improbable as it would seem in human reasoning that the closing meeting should be given to one of another church coming in with her request so at the last of the feast, yet they did, and the Lord so blessed my effort to make this Christian people acquainted with the burden of my soul that while many hearts were touched with sympathy and interest in the work, one dear sister was, at least, so thoroughly converted that although a perfect stranger to me she requested me to go to her cottage saying, "I have some money for you." On expressing my surprise, thinking she must surely be mistaken in the person, she repeated with emphasis, "I have some money for you. There is a little income that I handle, one-tenth of which is the Lord's, and I have a few dollars laid by that I want you to take and use in that very work that you brought to our notice to-day." Thus from the well known Sister Lozier I received my first installment to the fund that the voice of the Spirit was saying I should be able to raise for a refuge for the unfortunate of earth, if I would but exercise the talent that He had given me in their behalf.

In October, 1879, I attended the convention of the W. C. T. U. of our State, carrying to them the burden of my heart for the unfortunate women and girls of our commonwealth.

Digitized by Google

I was privileged with an opportunity of unburdening my soul to the sisters of the convention and was by them appointed chairman of a committee for work among fallen women. I was also made a delegate to the national convention to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, which to me seemed to be ordered of the Lord, as but a few months before I had listened to the story of the wonderful work done in that State by Sarah Smith, a minister of my own church, in which she had, under the blessing of the Lord, brought into actual being an institution similar to that of my desire which up to this time I had supposed only a creature of my brain, not knowing that such an institution had a real existence anywhere. From the time I was privileged to listen to the story of Sarah Smith's wonderful achievements, I longed to see her face to face, above all other women in the range of my knowledge, and alike desired above all places to visit her institution, the reformatory for women criminals separate and apart from the penitentiary where male convicts are incarcerated. The institution being situated but five miles out from the city I felt sure that if in the providence of God it was made possible for me to attend the convention, I should also have the opportunity of realizing my great desire. But so insignificant was the little woman, and so far had she failed of arousing interest in her heart burden, with one of the prominent workers, at least, in the W. C. T. U. that she came to me at the close of the convention expressing her regrets at my appointment as delegate to the National saying that she had in mind another woman that she had so desired to send in my place. She, being State organizer, had really no jurisdiction over who should be sent from our district, and, too, as the convention had passed its final adjournment, it was too late even to attempt a reconsideration. So I was privileged to find myself seated with the Iowa delegation in the National convention, which was one of the grandest privileges I had ever enjoyed, it being the convention in which our noble Frances Willard was elected for the first time National

Digitized by Google

President, grand to me because of what came after. At the time I little dreamed of the blessing that was coming to the department of W. C. T. U. work, then in its inception, to which my life was pledged, through the noble young woman who was chosen in preference to the experienced matronly woman who had presided so grandly over so great an assemblage of women. As I remember, I questioned the propriety of the change, and cast my ballot in doubt, the suffrage question alone turning the scale in favor of the young candidate. It was not until several years later when it was my privilege again to attend the National Convention, convened at this time in Philadelphia, that I realized in Frances Willard the woman, who, though standing at the head of the women of the nation, and with both heart and hand full of the multiplied departments of work, yet had the interest in the one that I had brought as my burden to the great convention, to not only make way for its having a place among the national departments, but to take the superintendency herself after having sought in vain throughout the ranks of the W.C.T.U. of our great nation for a woman who was willing to stand at the head of so difficult and unpopular a department. And, in company with a noted missionary, it was my privilege to stand face to face with Sarah Smith and to hear, from her own lips, the confirmation of the stories to which I had listened some months before, and go through the institution which was the reality of my imagination. One of the wonderful stories to which I listened was that of the condition of one of the prisoners, an old lady, who had some years before been sentenced for life, so had spent some time in the common penitentiary, and had there showed herself such a fiend incarnate that Sarah Smith was assured by the warden who accompanied her to the reformatory that her life surely would be in danger at the hands of such a woman with so little protection and physical force as was furnished for the institution. But contrary to his expectation Sister Smith received no damage at her hand, but she told me that

Digitized by Google

she found her of such a bitter spirit that it seemed to give her fiendish enjoyment to sit and utter bitter oaths in their times of devotion, and when she had brought all the discipline to bear upon her that she felt willing to exercise and was about to give up in despair of doing her any good when the voice of the Spirit plainly addressed her thus, "Thou hast never thrown thy arms around that woman and kissed her and called her thy sister as thou hast less repulsive cases." "At this," she said, "I instinctively shrank but as I meditated upon it as a direction of the Lord I came plainly to see my duty. So taking my work in my hands I went into her cell and sat down, silent for a little time and then asked her the question, 'My sister, why art thou so perverse.' The answer came, while her countenance expressed all the depths of its meaning: '*There is not a being in all this world but that hates me and therefore I hate everybody.*' I replied, 'that is not so my sister, for I love thee,' and throwing my arms about her I sealed my assertion with a kiss. The rigid countenance softened, the desired end was attained. From that hour I never had any trouble with her." It was my privilege to enter the apartment of this life long prisoner. The old lady was ill that day so I found her in bed. On her stand lay her open Bible, beside it her easy chair. In leaving the common penitentiary and coming to Sarah Smith's reformatory she had exchanged her narrow prison cell for a pleasant airy bed room whose only reminder of a place of imprisonment was the bars at the window and these half hidden by trailing vines. Here under the benign rule of Christian women the fiend had been changed to a saint. For as I looked into that loving face, there remained no trace of the hardness that so caused Sarah Smith to shrink at the thought of the embrace and kiss. This, though such a striking instance of the power of the grace of God when ministered by the loving touch of the human and the Divine, was but one of the many thus changed from fiend to saint under the loving rule of this saintly woman, for she acted the part of both warden and chaplain in the institution for many

Digitized by Google

years, faithfully at her post until she came down to the river's brink when the mortal was exchanged for the immortal. In the presence of this saintly woman my soul received fresh inspiration and my judgment also, guided by the instructions she gave me as to how to carry forward the work, both in the erection of a reformatory, where all unfortunate and erring ones might flee for safety and Christian shelter from the rude criticisms of the world, and receive healing and strength to go and commence anew the battle of life, but also in regard to the appeals to the legislature that would be necessary in order to obtain a compulsory reformatory under the care of Christian women for the State of my adoption.

Although, while these pages are being penned, comes the intelligence that the grand structure for the reformation of women and girls, brought into being by the untiring efforts of dear Sarah Smith, lies in ruins, yet, out of its ashes, Phœnix like, rises a far grander structure, in the fact of the power of women to care for and control those of her own sex. As in the great emergency, when all hope of staying the devouring flames was lost, we hear the calm and worthy woman at the head of all this charge calling to the prisoners, saying: "The building is on fire, and I am going to unlock your doors; will you all stand by me?" "Most certainly we will," was the quick response. And so closely did they adhere to their promise that not one move was made toward escape, notwithstanding a number of them were under a life time sentence, and no guard present with deadly weapons to deter them.

Returning home from the National Convention my plans were soon perfected, and, although not authorized by the organization under whose authority I was appointed to the work for fallen women, I ventured to carry forward my plan, which was to canvass the State, presenting both in public and private for value and signature a note reading thus:

"I hereby agree to pay to the treasurer of the W. C. T. U. of..... the sum of.....due when $20,000.00 is pledged for the making of a reformatory home for the fallen women of Iowa."

Digitized by Google

I ventured my first public presentation in my home city, Decorah, and while reason keeps her seat I shall never forget the timid shrinking of my womanly nature at the thought of coming before the public to plead the cause of that class of womanhood of whom all the ages had written: "They are beyond hope, past redemption, deserve no sympathy, let them go on and down." So I timidly sandwiched my first public meeting in with one in response to a call of our state president asking the president of each local union to hold a mass meeting as a sort of thank offering to the House of the Eighteenth General Assembly for passing our bill for submitting to the people the privilege to change the constitution in regard to alcoholic beverages and to extend to the Senate an expression of our earnest desire that they should do likewise.

I remember making the announcement for the meeting, embracing those two subjects, from the stage in the opera house at the close of one of Mrs. Goode's (now Hinman) Juvenile entertainments. It was easy enough to announce the first subject, but, as I came to the second, I said, "And to plead the cause of the woman driven from everywhere, and to make an appeal for help to build a somewhere to drive her to," feeling keenly the expression, not voiced in words, but read in the countenance of the faces before me. My next step was to go to the Congregational and Methodist ministers with the program of the meeting asking them to announce it from the pulpit in the morning previous to the evening on which it occurred. My heart sank within me as, although each announced promptly that in regard to the call of the state president, but that in relation to the subject burden of my soul they were too modest to mention.

Being president of our union, it was my duty not only to make the call, but also to program the meeting, which was that the Methodist minister should conduct the opening and closing exercises, and that the Congregational minister should make a short temperance speech in response to the call of our state president, and the remaining portion of the hour I reserved for a plea for the fallen.

Digitized by Google

The hour came, and the Methodist had done well his part in the opening exercises, and the Congregationalist had made his temperance speech. They seemed to have forgotten altogether that the remaining portion of the hour belonged to me, and called for several five and ten minute speeches, after which there was a pause, then everybody was startled by a little woman stepping on the platform, claiming her right to the remaining portion of the evening. Her plea was made, and her appeal also. At the close, two women responded, one making her note valuable for $10, another for $25.

Aside from that the audience sat as cool and immovable as though a torrent of ice water had been thrown upon them, and for days the poor little woman had to feel that her name was in everybody's mouth. If a lion had been let loose in the community it would not have caused greater talk. But having lived through this, I ventured one more presentation of the work in a neighboring village, which was responded to encouragingly, by a number of my notes being made valuable by amount and signature; but it was not until June of the same year that I turned my attention exclusively to the work of raising money for a voluntary reformatory, and presenting the necessity of the compulsory. My time during the remainder of the winter and spring being so closely occupied in the interest of a fallen girl, who was then in our jail, and who for months had been held a prisoner in a house of ill-fame, where she had appropriated part of the money given her in trust by one of the visitors of that haunt of vice, for which she was arrested for theft, and was in jail waiting her trial. But finding that the penalty for her crime would be the penitentiary, as she had passed her sixteenth year, the age at which the same crime would have committed her to the reform school for girls, I turned my attention to circulating a petition to support the bill then pending in the legislature changing the time of admission from sixteen to eighteen years; but after all my vigilant labor the bill, after having passed the House and being favorably reported on by the com-

Digitized by Google

mittee of the Senate, was lost for the want of some one interested enough to fish it out of the sifting basket, into which so many bills go and are lost, for the want of support from some good lobbyist. Not being there in person, I found I was working at too long a range, so turned my attention to our court, begging lenience for the girl, under promise that she would amend her life. Then came the qustion, "where could she go, and who would take her in?"

Despite her good resolution her every appearance told all too well what society she had been in to admit of her being taken into any private family and as there was not in all Iowa any reformatory institution for a girl over sixteen, I resolved to go begging and found, in a younger State than ours, shelter in a Catholic institution maintained and presided over by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. I will never forget the humiliation that I felt as a Protestant of Iowa seeking the sheltering care of one of Iowa's daughters of those Catholic Sisters of St. Paul, Minn., whose religion I had always been taught was antagonistic to mine. But as the Mother Superior so kindly received the girl, giving her such good advice, furnished me with such comfortable entertainment during the night that I spent there, allowed me to join them in their morning devotion, and gave me the privilege of addressing the girls as they sat at their work, some seventy-five of them, plying the industries by which they were helping to earn the daily bread of the house, and as she took me to the apartment where were seated twenty-five or thirty so neatly attired in the costume of the order, engaged in their fine sewing and needle work which also contributed to the support of the house, she said, "These are our Magdalens," which meant picked up from the gutter, perfectly saved for they had taken the vow to remain.

I must confess I bowed to the cloister and said, "Amen! you are better off here even if you never cross the threshold of this house during your life than you would be in such awful sinks of vice as are polluting every city and hamlet in

Digitized by Google

our own State where the loveliest forms of girlhood yield to the power of vice and disease and sink into the prostitute's grave in a few short years, and whose places are continually being supplied by victims who have first been seduced and then when no refuge of Christian shelter is open to them, they seek and find shelter in these and in their turn go down."

I was privileged also with an account of their financial standing. The story of how they first went out begging and raised sufficient to make a payment on their comfortable quarters, and now by their industries, which embrace laundry work as well as sewing, they were not only supporting their household, numbering one hundred and fifty, and keeping up the interest, but reducing their indebtedness annually.

In the presence of all this, is it any wonder that I should pledge my life to go and do likewise, feeling the positive assurance that what Catholic women could do in Minnesota, the Protestant women can do in Iowa and would if the subject was properly presented to them.

One of the outside sisters kindly conducted me to another refuge in the city, under the auspices of the Protestant churches. Here I found them in a rented building, unable to support only a small family, but doing a grand reformatory work to the few they were able to care for. I had heard of Mother Van Cleaves' work for the fallen in Minneapolis, and embraced the opportunity of visiting it. Here, also, I found them paying a high rent and only able to shelter a few.

Mrs. Walker, one of the board of managers, planned for me to meet with Mother Van Cleaves, by inviting us both to her house. In the presence of this white-haired mother in Israel I received fresh inspiration, zeal and willingness to become a beggar, as I listened to her story of how when she had found two of those unfortunate creatures tired and sick of their low life, and anxious for Christian shelter, she, with promised help from but one good man, took the responsibility of renting a building, and then went out begging, as she said, a cast off chair here, a bedstead there, until she had got sufficient

Digitized by Google

together to partly furnish the house; then she secured a lady to take charge and began to take the unfortunates in. With rent to pay and the support of the home to be kept up, she found the necessity of applying herself almost constantly as a beggar. The work was new, unthought of by nearly all she met. She was wont to meet refusals, and sometimes almost abused, for undertaking work so low, but she said, laughingly: "I had a very pleasant way of not hearing their unkind words, for all I had to do was drop my trumpet, and then I would not hear a word they said, but went right on begging them for the means to carry on my work, endeavoring always to keep in the spirit of a nun of the order of the vow of extreme poverty, whom I saw once in Cincinnati, in her sombre dress, enter a place of business and approach one of the firm with her outstretched hand, and their only appeal, 'can you give me something for my poor?' The man, perhaps grown impatient by her oft repeated appeals, gave her a thrust which almost amounted to a blow, and in reality placed her outside the door. She stood for a few moments in silence, as though doing battle with any feeling that the rude treatment might have caused, and then turning re-entered, and approaching the same man again, she said: 'The blow you gave was for me, that was all right, but can you give me something for my poor?' That time her appeal was kindly responded to. So I also kept on begging. And thus the institution has been supported from year to year, and many have been rescued from the haunts of vice and have been restored to society clothed in their right minds."

Just here my physical strength gave way. The excitement and responsibility from the time I persuaded the young girl to plead guilty to a penitentiary offense in order to have the jail for a boarding place for her while I brought reformatory measures to bear, not knowing whether the court would be as lenient as I hoped, together with the labor and anxiety over the bill pending in the legislature; the failure to obtain it; the seeking of shelter with the Catholic Sisters; and above

Digitized by Google

all, the excitement of taking the young girl in disguise to St. Paul, fearing lest the saloon-keeper from whose lecherous greed I had snatched her might, after all, get possession of her before she was safely housed with the Sisters, had been too great a strain and nature demanded pay back for the heavy draft made upon her. But while I was resting the physical, the mental kept thinking on as to the steps by which womanhood descended so low. The power of her influence over youth and even manhood from the depths of her degradation and the "how" to lift her from her low estate and return her to paths of rectitude, were the plans that were continually evolving.

It was self-evident that I had committed a great depredation on the saloon-keeper in rescuing the young girl above alluded to, and well might I fear his wrath. For while he had her as an attraction in his saloon, their boast was that they could sell a half dozen kegs of beer a day, but when once she was safely out of his hands the pitiful whine came from those interested with him, "we have dull times at our corner now. We cannot sell half a keg of beer a day." In this case the "Bar Maid System" which is attracting so mnch attention fearing lest it be imported from England, was fully demonstrated. For with the presence of this beautiful "Bar Maid" a half dozen kegs of beer would be sold where half a keg could scarcely be disposed of in the absence of this charm.

Sitting at home under the doctor's care with almost a crushing weight upon me of this responsibility in how far was I my sister's keeper, and why was this burden rolled so heavily on me who had not a dollar to invest and who had not strength to go out and solicit it from others? Continually the question was coming, "Was it my daughter who had been seduced and, in prospective motherhood, was seeking shelter in a den of infamy, and *that* when all the world beside was closed to her; or was it my daughter shut in powerless before those merciless fiends with whom she had to mingle; or my son just to be lured in to be robbed of his virtue in boyhood,

Digitized by Google

that would poison his moral being through all his manhood, what would I do?" I found that I would pass through fire or water or anything that was possible to be passed for their rescue, but while the physical was thus laid aside and the mental was stretching out battling with almost impossibilities, my physician as he called one day said, "Out of door exercise will do you more good than medicine," and I mentally exclaimed, "I have got my credentials now. I will start at once to canvass the State although it is at but a snail pace. If it injures me my dear children cannot find fault with me, for I will say, "The doctor prescribed it." Thus I began slowly to canvass our own little city presenting my little note talking perhaps for an hour to get one dollar pledged, and at the same time undertaking to pay my own expenses by selling books. Thus I prosecuted my way taking in the little railway stations from Decorah to McGregor. But, when in the heat of summer I returned over the same ground to deliver my books, I found the labor telling heavily on the little strength I had and looking the canvass of the whole State, containing her ninety-nine counties, in the face, I concluded to heed the gospel call, "Come and let us reason together." And, as I thus reasoned before the Lord I felt sure that he did not want me to expend my strength in the book agency, and that it was His will that in my public meetings I should ask for a little collection, just enough to keep me in the field until the $20,000 was pledged. But I can assure my readers this taking of a collection was no easy matter for I was reared in the Quaker church, and had for years been a Quaker minister, and collections in those days were almost an abomination in our view.

I will never forget how timidly I made my first appeal. I told the people, oh! so hesitatingly, that I could not live altogether on heavenly manna. Neither had I angel wings to convey me from place to place, so I asked simply for just enough to keep me alive and in the field until the work was done. But I had not gone far until my collections were far

Digitized by Google

outreaching my expenses and money was quite freely pledged. But, oh! how careful I had to be with my public talks in those days. The White Cross movement in England, and Social Purity on our side of the water had not so much as been dreamed of.

I remember how I used to lead my audience about in Judea with the despised Man of Nazareth, citing His examples of compassion for the erring and unfortunate, ere I would dare to touch my subject. It cost me something, too, in those days, to get the privilege of presenting my work before an audience.

The number of local unions in the State at that time was few, and even in places where there were unions there was no arrangement for this department of the work. It came to them as a sort of interloper which had to be made way for ere it could have a place. So, on my arrival at any point where I wished to introduce my new and strange departure, the first thing to do was to deposit my effects at the hotel, make an inquiry whether there was any W. C. T. U., and, if there was one, hunt up the members and endeavor to enlist their sympathy in the work so as to secure their aid in arranging for the meeting. If there was no union, the first to be sought out were the ministers of the churches, and so explain my purpose to them as to win their favor and gain admittance to the sacred desk.

Sometimes, however, I had to see every separate trustee of the church and get their consent ere the minister would dare to grant me the favor asked. I remember on one occasion having to walk for hours in the rain to call on these trustworthy gentlemen and get their consent ere I could have the privilege of a few moments in which to present the work at the close of the prayer meeting. Just here comes to mind an instance when on a sultry afternoon I had overheated myself in my work of calling on several of the W. C. T. U. sisters of the place without the desired effect of moving them to interest, and returning to my hotel sad of heart and weary of

Digitized by Google

limb, I sat down for a moment in the public parlor to rest before going to supper, and while thus sitting by myself, a fine appearing lady came from the dining room, and as we met face to face, although strangers, we bowed to each other and I arose saying, "As making the acquaintance of the women of Iowa is my business, I will extend my hand," which she grasped very cordially and inquired, "What is your business?" I said, "I am canvassing the State in the interest of a home for the unfortunate girls and fallen women of our State." She instantly let go her grasp, saying, "You cannot talk that to me," and almost flew from the room; she could not have gone faster if I had said, "I have the small pox." As she was about to ascend the staircase I said, "Oh! sister, wait a little." She again hastily said, "You can't talk that to me," and almost flew up the stairs.

This so filled to overflowing my cup of sadness as to drive me to my only sure refuge, and I bowed my head in my hands and groaned out, "Oh, Lord, help her?" My few moments with the Lord closed, and few prayers have ever been answered sooner for I had scarcely re-entered the parlor after supper until she stood humbly before me saying, "We want you to come up stairs; my daughter wants to talk with you." I must confess my weakness for human nature flinched just a little, nevertheless it took but a moment to whip it into obedience for the thought came, "The thorn hath peirced me, so the roses must be near," and I was soon meekly following the lady upstairs where she introduced me to her widowed daughter. The secret of how my prayer was answered by the softening of the mother's heart was soon disclosed as the daughter revealed to me the burden that had for years rested on the heart of her dead husband for the very class for whom I was laboring. She said, "For several years we boarded in hotels and those poor creatures would come and be turned out with nowhere to go except back to dens of infamy. He had just written to the bishop hoping to be aided and guided in some work for their benefit, when the hand of disease was laid upon him which soon terminated his earth work."

Digitized by Google

Thus I saw that in scorning me the mother had wounded the heart of her stricken child. During my stay at the hotel I found in this young widow almost constant companionship, and as she gave me her small donation, she wished it so many hundred times more, and charged me if I ever went to Davenport to be sure to go and lay the subject before Bishop Perry.

Here I must not fail to note the blessing that had its start in this bit of scorning although so much time had passed ere I visited Davenport, that I did not even call to mind the charge that had been given me to visit Bishop Perry.

Arriving late at night I secured lodging in the hotel at the the depot, but rather demurred at the situation of my room when I was elevated to the fifth story by the colored waiter, and on entering I remarked it would be rather an unpleasant situation for an old lady to be aroused by the alarm of fire at so great a height from the ground. He replied by taking down what looked to me like a bell cord hanging on a hook beside the window and stood for a moment looking it over as though at a loss as to just how it should be adjusted. Then finding a loop at the end threw it over his shoulders saying: "Just troo it over yo shoulders dis way and troo yoself out de window. It will be purfectly safe, purfectly safe."

Not feeling so secure in my situation as my colored waiter seemed to think I was, I resolved to find another boarding place if I was favored to get safe through that night.

However, when morning came, I was so intent on attending the Supreme Court before whom the re-hearing of our amendment bill was then pending that I forgot all about the elevation of my quarters until the closing of that day's session and night was again at hand.

Turning to some of the ladies about me I inquired for a private boarding place. No one being able to direct me to one, a small gray haired woman standing near said, "I do not keep a boarding house, but if you will accept of my humble fare I will take you home with me." I gladly accepted her hospitality and in the morning as I was sitting at the front

Digitized by Google

window my attention was attracted to a man with something like a bishop's robes thrown over his arm which he carried from one large brick building to another situated on the lawn just across the street. I called the attention of my hostess and asked what it meant, to which she replied, "Why, that is the home of Bishop Perry." "Bishop Perry! Oh, I want the privilege of presenting my work to him." To which she replied, "He is quite reserved. I think there would be difficulty in gaining admittance to his presence." "Well," I said, "but I promised that if ever I visited Davenport I would call on Bishop Perry and solicit his counsel and aid in the work." And telling her the story of the charge I received, and the promise I had given, she said, "Well, then, we will try." And pursuant to our determination we were soon at the door of the bishop's home, and found admission to his presence of such easy access that we had but to ring the door bell to be ushered into the parlor by a servant and to wait not more than a tenth of the time a fashionable lady would have caused us to before the bishop was seated in our presence giving all attention, and expressing deep sympathy and interest in the work as it was presented to him, and said at the close, "I want you to write out a concise statement of your work and your purpose in it, and I will put it in my recommendation to my people at our next annual meeting."

Thus I gained through the recommendations of the bishop the more easy access to the Episcopal churches throughout the State, which really was worth more than the little bit of scorning cost, even though I did have to choke back that certain enlargement in the throat and dry the starting tear.

The long walks and the long talks that it cost me in presenting this work to the people of the State in general were after all but a light matter and really a joyful business compared with the labor and suffering that it cost to break down the long time prejudice of woman toward her sister woman so as to make it possible to carry forward this work for fallen womanhood under the auspices of the W. C. T. U. of Iowa.

Digitized by Google

It was not but that I found favorable responses in all the unions, for the only exceptions were here and there a president of a union whose religion was so of the priest and Levite order that she would not give her assent to the putting out of the hand of relief to these poor fallen between Jericho and Jerusalem. But with the executive committee was the tug of war.

I have often been asked if I did not suffer as my work called me face to face with keepers in dens of infamy. I answered, "Yes, but there is not where I have suffered most. I blush to say it, but it is nevertheless true, that my most awful crucibles of agony have been in the presence of the executive committee, when my subject has been before them for judgment, and I knew it was in their power to lay it waste or help it forward. Right here I want to offer all the apology that is in my power to make. There was not only that prejudice of woman against her sister woman to be overcome and gotten out of the way, but their minds were so full of other lines of work, and especially that of saving fallen men from the power of the wine cup, that there was no room for the intrusion of that which has for its object the salvation of the crowning excellence of God's creation, so fallen, so marred, so degraded, so past redemption, and in their thought so much lower than a fallen man that it was, in their judgment, beyond the bounds of possibility for her ever to be cleansed and made white even through the all atoning blood of the Lamb. This is just what made it necessary for the burdened worker to carry the work always in advance of the sanction of the executive committee and have to come before them and labor for their approval of work already done. The little note was printed and its first presentation made to the public previous to the meeting of the executive committee in April, 1880, to which it, with my plans for raising the needed funds, was submitted in writing, as I was too feeble in health and poor in purse to be present in person. According to parliamentary rule and usage it was thrown under the table as a thing

Digitized by Google

impossible. One of the executive officers saying afterwards, "I turned up my nose at it and said, 'There is no harm in signing that for it will never amount to anything.' "

Notwithstanding this added burden of discouragement, the voice of the Spirit still whispered, "Go forward, I will stand by thee and thou shalt succeed." Thus encouraged of the Lord, although discouraged of *women*, I went forward to the work. But I must own that my brain often reeled when consulting the map of the State in taking my directions from city to city as the ninety-nine counties to be canvassed were before me, and I found it necessary to turn my eye from the mountain to the great mountain Mover in whom alone was rest and peace.

So it was with the added burden of the disapproval of the executive committee that I abandoned myself to the life of a beggar. But there were gleams of sunshine in this life of shadow for I had not finished canvassing my home city until the Lord blessed me in the rescue of a beautiful little girl of six from a house of ill-fame.

As I rapped at the door, the dear little creature opened it part way saying, "Mamma's sick." I knew "mamma" and I knew that she had no little girl, and doubted her being dangerously ill, yet I entered in apparent sympathy, finding her in bed and inquired after her health. She complained that she had not rested well the night before, which I very readily believed as such people seldom do. From the moment my eye fell on the child, my heart was set on her rescue and I began carefully to lay my plans. The woman affected to be very pure and innocent, and complained that people were talking about her and begged my aid in counteracting the statements. I told her that if I made any statements regarding the purity of her life, she would have to place herself under different circumstances. In some pure family, I suggested, or in some institution. Knowing that she was a Catholic, I lauded the home of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd as a grand shelter for her. In that case I hinted that we would have to have

Digitized by Google

another home for the little girl. All the while we were talking the little creature sat as motionless as a piece of statuary apparently not paying any heed to what we were saying, but by what I learned afterward I found that she was drinking it all in with hope. The second visit was paid in interest of the child and again she seemed a little motionless being, but on my third approach to the house as she saw me coming she bounded with joy saying, "Mrs. Benedict is coming and Mrs. Horn is not here." I asked "Who is here?" She said, "My mother." I entered to find a rather weak minded German woman who I found was the child's real mother, and had come from the county house in an adjoining county at the request of this fiendish woman, not knowing what sort of a house she had entered. Some six months before, the keeper of this den of infamy had represented herself to the superintendent of the county poor house as an English lady, taking the child and promising to give the mother a home as soon as she was able to leave the institution. I found her with a baby of six weeks and it did not take long to persuade her to leave, provided I could find any shelter for her. This gave me something to do, for as I hastily called from house to house for shelter for the poor woman and her children for a few hours and perhaps a night, I each time received a positive refusal, until at last I reluctantly made my appeal at the door of a very feeble, old widow who said, "Bring them to me," which I soon did, although my judgment said she ought not to be disturbed with anything that would be likely to bring her into contact with her formidable neighbor, which was but barely averted by a swift, heated little woman who seeing the enraged fiend in search of her prey, by double quick movement got into the old lady's house just in time to lock this emissary of Satan out. I, however, was not so favored, for I had to meet her and meet the blast of her fury, but the Lord blest me in soon calming her rage so that she made no further interference while I besought one whose duty it was by virtue of his office to take them back to Alamakee County House and

Digitized by Google

tell those in charge where we had found them. This, he complained, he could not do as his health would hardly admit of the undertaking and told me I must go and see one of the other officers which would involve a two mile walk under the mid-summer sun. This I had undertaken at a quick pace when I was suddenly arrested by the call of a good Samaritan inquiring, "Mrs. Benedict, have you rescued that child?" I said, "I have, now I want a man's help quick." He said, "What do you want? I am the man." I said, "I want a man with a team to take a woman and her children to Allamakee County House as soon as it can be done." He replied, "I have had my eye upon that little girl for some time and friends of mine who have no children have requested me to hunt up a little girl for them as nice as the one we had adopted some time ago. And my ambition has been to place her in that family if I could possibly get possession of her. Now, if the mother will give her consent, I will be on my way to-morrow morning before six o'clock and I will place her where Mrs. Horn will never find her." Then I said, "Let us go quickly to the mother."

I introduced the gentleman to her, saying, "This man has come to take your little girl out of the reach of Mrs. Horn. All he is waiting for now is your consent. He says he will be on his way in the morning at six o'clock. So, if you are willing, you had better take her to his house at once."

True to his promise the good Samaritan placed the child in a good Christian home, but still the mother and babe were to be disposed of. So, without leave or license from those in authority, I soon deposited them safely at the door of our county house leaving the two counties to settle the matter of expense at their leisure, but judge of my amusement when a year and a half later I found them in a lawsuit over which should bear the burden of the support. I was only sorry that I could not have been one of the witnesses in the case to have represented the fact of our officers knowing all about the case at the beginning and did not give to Allamakee county its

Digitized by Google

paupers or report it to the authorities in time to save our county the expense.

Another joyous privilege came to me during the summer of this year. My son and daughter, who were both teachers, resolved that during their summer vacation, not only to make it pleasant for mother but for themselves, to meet me at Clear Lake with tent and conveniences from home necessary for our encampment for a month. This gave me a good opportunity of introducing my work to the Christian people of the State as they came up to our grand temperance rallies and to the Methodist camp meeting and other gatherings of interest that brought them together to that summer resort.

While at Clear Lake I met the Rev. Pardee who, knowing of my work, told me a story of his own experience. Sitting in his study one evening near bedtime there was a rap at his door, and on responding, he was met by a colored man whose inquiry was, "Rev. Pardee, are you willing to go anywhere that you can do any good?" Giving him an answer in the affirmative he then said, "Come, go with me, for in Ida Allen's den there is a young girl going down with consumption who is very anxious to see a minister."

"I followed my guide and soon found myself in a house of infamy, and in the presence of the emaciated form of the sick girl. I selected and read encouraging portions of the sacred Word; knelt beside her bed in prayer, and as I rose she lay quite still for a few moments and then fairly shrieked, 'Oh, take me from this house. I will die on the pavement or anywhere, but not in this house.' This request I could not comply with as the iron rules of propriety forbade that I should take her to my house, and I had no hope of any door opening in any Christian home for her. Propriety also forbade that I should repeat visits to such a place. But one thing I thought I might do, and that was to secure a Christian woman to daily minister to the spiritual wants of the dying girl and casting about in my own congregation to find a woman that I thought would undertake the humiliating task, I could find none. A

Digitized by Google

Sister Libbe who had recently come to the city came to my mind as one that might act the part of the 'earth angel,' and laying the case before her I received a ready response. I have told you the story thus far, now I will introduce you to Mrs. Libbe for she can tell you the story of her work there better than I can."

He introduced to me the lovely Sister Libbe whose very countenance bespoke the love for her Master that filled her soul. She then told me the story of her daily visits to the bedside of the sufferer, and how she longed to meet that one great want to take her from that house to some Christian shelter, and not having in her own limited quarters any accommodation besides the room she and her husband and child occupied, and her means also being limited, it was impossible for her to provide the so greatly desired shelter. So all she could do was to continue her visits to the girl until the soul that was refused Christian shelter on earth was translated to the society of the redeemed in heaven and to the shelter of a mansion in glory.

Leaving Clear Lake at the close of the meetings I canvassed my way toward Sioux City. Stopping off one evening at Le Mars, near sunset, and on arriving at the hotel found myself in strange and uncomfortable quarters. That which in my judgment, should have been a public sitting room, and perhaps was on common occasions, was filled with all manner of trappings suited to the convenience of horsemen and the comfort of their horses, as there was a horse fair then going on. It was a very pleasing array of halters, saddles, bridles, blankets, etc., but no resting place for the weary little woman that I was, so I asked to be taken to my room. But here I found anything but rest and comfort, for as I poured water in the bowl preparatory to washing, there came issuing from every crevice and corner such an array of black bugs clamoring for the privilege of first slaking their thirst in the cooling beverage as to cause me to turn away in disgust and beat a hasty retreat to the hallway by which I had entered. But finding

Digitized by Google

no resting place there, I took leave to join two or three ladies who were seated on the front steps, wondering how I was to pass the night in a place that seemed to me almost unbearable for an hour. But my gloomy reflections on my situation were pleasantly broken in upon by the sound of a church bell. On being informed it was a call to the Methodist prayer meeting in their church but a little way off, I took fresh courage thinking there was before me a door of escape, which proved most blessedly true, as almost the first person I met was a Brother Norris whose acquaintance I had made among the earnest Christian and temperance workers during the meetings in the pavillion at Clear Lake. He very cordially proffered me the shelter of his home during my stay in the city, which I found not only a very comfortable resting place for a tired body, but I was also refreshed spiritually in the Christian converse with him and his devoted wife.

However, they pointed out some very severe work for me, as they told me of a den of infamy in a suburb of their city running on a large scale as it was supported by the patronage of not only the lecherous of the city, but by a colony of English bachelors living not far distant. I will never forget the walk of nearly a mile as I wended my way to that sinful abode. Although the rays of a summer's sun came down with almost scorching heat and the grass was parched beneath my feet, and the terrible abode of sin before me, yet there seemed to me such a convoy of angels to attend me as to mark the time as one peculiarly blessed of the Lord. On arriving at the terrible abode, I presented myself as a missionary in the city in interest of a home for unfortunate girls to be met by the bland reply of the keeper, "I keep that kind of a boarding house myself. It is not necessary for girls to be so very low to be in this business. I keep a physician over my girls and keep them just as respectable as they can be and be in this business." I said, "I am looking at the condition of these girls from this standpoint, 'were they my daughters,'" and I plied her with the one thought "my daughter" until she

Digitized by Google

broke completely down and said, "I have just one daughter. Rather than she should enter a life like this I would almost rather take her life with my own hand." While we were thus talking, my attention was particularly attracted to a girl who, although dressed in the gaudy attire of the house, seemed to me an awkward country girl of perhaps fourteen years. The next morning on taking up the daily paper I found a notice of a father in search of his fourteen year old daughter. The last that had been seen of her she was going toward Le Mars. This led me to think beyond a doubt that I had seen his missing daughter in that terrible den which, according to the declaration of the keeper, was being kept on Iowa's soil under the rules regulating licensed prostitution. Here was a germ planted, which if allowed to bring forth its evil fruit, must inevitably culminate in the establishment by law of that which was now being carried on in full effect, although contrary to law. It was with a determined will that there never should be such a law in Iowa that I undertook this work, firmly resolved to leave no stone unturned that I could turn to prevent it. As there was no W. C. T. U. in the place all the work of planning for a public meeting devolved on Brother Norris, in which his efforts were a complete success, as their opera house was crowded and a good collection taken, beside a hundred or more pledged on notes.

A few days later, in the course of my work, I arrived at Sioux City late at night. Sister Libbe was the only lady with whom I was acquainted, and of course my thought was to find her as soon as possible. Making inquiry at the hotel I found her husband's place of business was just across the street from where I was stopping and that her rooms were in the back part of the building. So immediately after breakfast I sought the presence of this congenial spirit. I found her borne down with grief and in great distress. I listened to the story of her sorrow which reached back to the time she visited the girl in Ida Allen's place. She says, "During my visits there I noticed repeatedly a very intelligent, lovely

Digitized by Google

appearing girl, ministering to the physical wants of the sufferer so tenderly and even reading to her from the sacred Word, and I became so interested and attracted to the young girl that I thought surely she must be some one of purer life who was coming in as I was, acting the part of the ministering angel, but, as she left the room one day, I ventured to inquire who she was. "Ah," said the sufferer, "she is one of us."

So when the form that I had been ministering to was laid away my intense interest in that abode of wickedness did not cease but shortly after the object of my interest disappeared for a long time. I could get no trace of her, but a few days ago a notice appeared in the paper telling of her horrible death in a den of infamy in another city, and I have been overwhelmed with grief ever since at the thought of one so lovely coming to such an end. But yesterday word came to me that the newspaper notice was a mistaken one for the young girl had again been seen at Ida Allen's. "Well then," I said, "come, dry your tears and let us get to active service. Let us go at once to Ida Allens."

She led the way and we soon found ourselves at what appeared to be a very large boarding house. We were admitted and given seats in the parlor where we had not been seated but a few moments until she who had been accounted as dead entered the room.

But, oh, the dreadful work of the destroyer. How much had been accomplished in the short time intervening. She seemed now past hope of help.

While I was talking to the keeper and girls that came into the room, of the sinfulness of their lives, a beautiful girl fixed her eyes upon me as though she would pierce me through, and said, "If one of us would leave this place and do the very best we could, would you take us into your house?"

I could not say that I would, for indeed at that time I had no home to take her to, but I was glad that I could say, "Dear girl, my life is pledged to provide a home for you, and then the question will be, "will you come?"

Digitized by Google

Just here another girl presented herself at the door, and addressing a servant in the farther end of the room, said, "Take a bottle of beer to my room." As I turned my eye upon the speaker, her glance met mine and she instinctively shrank. I was glad to see enough of womanhood in her that she should feel the degradation into which she had sunk.

Turning to the one with whom I had been conversing I asked the question, "Do you drink here?" "Drink! Why, we all drink. We could not live without it." "This tells the story," as said another poor unfortunate as I conversed with her, "we could not bear the pain of body or remorse of concience unless we were half drunk, and then we do not care."

Helpless to offer any shelter to the poor unfortunate ones, I could but leave them as I found them shut in a den of vice with no hope, but I turned to my work of providing a home for them with renewed determination, and consecration of all my God given powers. So turning to the keeper, I solicited even from her, and received $5 with the promise of $20 more in the future; but this I never received for I grieviously offended her in undertaking to rescue a beautiful little girl of two years that she was rearing in that den of infamy. I never gained my object, however, because I could not stay to give it personal attention, and, although many years have passed, my heart still yearns as I think of that little innocent being, never knowing what became of her beyond her happy gamboling about the hall of that home of vice.

My object in coming to the city was to get the privilege of speaking in the churches and thus bringing the purpose and burden of my soul to the hearts of the Christian community. Sister Libbe kindly introduced me to the Woman's Christian Association and to the W. C. T. U. sisters of the city, who not only contributed financially but gave me all the help they could. But, although I had spent nearly a week in the place, Saturday morning found me with no church door open, and no arrangement for a public meeting. It was the summer vacation. The Congregational and Baptist ministers were away.

Digitized by Google

The Methodist minister had offered me a part of the time for Sabbath evening, provided a stranger did not come that he was expecting. But on Saturday morning I was informed that the stranger had come, and there was only one chance more, and that was so very doubtful it was hardly worth while, the sisters thought, to make application. They said, "There is one Brother Avery left, the pastor of the Presbyterian church, but he is so very particular that we feel it would be hardly worth while, to ask for his church in which to present such an unpopular subject." To this I replied, "My directions from the Lord are, 'go to the ministers and lay the subject before them,' so no matter to me how particular Bro. Avery is, I will undertake to do my part if you will but give me an introduction to him." One of them assenting to do this, we soon found ourselves in the parlors of his comfortable home to be informed by his lovely wife that he was not in the city. But as I gave to her the burden of my soul for the unfortunate of my own sex, her heart was at once moved to sympathy and pity and she said just as though she had perfect control over the reverend pastor, "I want you to just wait at your boarding place after dinner until he comes. He will be in on the noon train and I will send him down." Obedient to the imperative directions, I waited until after two o'clock when the reverend gentleman appeared and said, "I see the importance of the work, but how you can present such a subject in a mixed audience is what I cannot see." I replied, "I can only say, brother, I have been doing it with success, that is all." He thoughtfully replied, "I will see some of the ladies of the church. If they think favorably of it, I will give the notice in the evening paper that you will speak in my church Sunday evening."

So it was not until the night shadows were falling and the paper came to the door that I was at all sure of a meeting. Spending much of the intervening time before the Lord as I felt that I was standing on critical ground, I had occasion in this instance to remember, as I oft-times had in the work, of

Digitized by Google

the situation of those whom John saw having the harps of God standing on a sea of glass mingled with fire. I attended Bro. Avery's church in the morning and the Lord wonderfully blessed him in the wants of my soul in his sermon from Deut. 32:11. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them upon her wings" Being invited to dinner with one of the prominent ladies of the church, I found her deeply concerned fearing lest the evening's talk should not be such as would meet the approval of Bro. Avery. Saying, "He is so able to help us both with pen and tongue should it be presented in such a way as to meet his approbation." My only reply was, "I have no prepared lecture, not the scratch of a pen, simply go before each audience with this prayer, 'Father, from the field of my knowledge bring to my remembrance the things best suited to those before me.' So, sister, prayer is our only refuge."

Evening came, Bro. Avery was prompt in his place, conducting the opening exercises in his very able way, and then introduced the speaker whom the Lord so blessed in not only presenting the subject, but in presenting it in a way to suit Bro. Avery that, when she took her seat, he came out on the floor with a bound, and turning to the audience said with emphasis, "I want to make a confession, I want to tell this people how timidly I took hold of this work, and now I want to tell you how I thank God that he has thrust somebody out into the work. And I want you to not only give a good collection here to-night, but I want that we should take hold of this work in Sioux City as we have never done it before." The cash results of my work in the city for the benefit of my desired object was $42 which was followed soon after by $60 more from the Woman's Christian Association, besides many small notes pledged for money in the future.

Having closed my work here I canvassed my way pretty directly toward our annual church meeting held at Oskaloosa and here I met with great encouragement. A meeting was

Digitized by Google

appointed especially for me to present the claims of my work which resulted in a cash collection of $40 and near $200 pledged on notes and it also resulted in the conversion of a dear old elder of our church who came to me in such great distress after my first presentation in my home city saying that the remarks that were being made about me in connection with such work were so unfavorable that he feared that I was going to make myself very unpopular, to which I only replied, "My master was unpopular before me, and I feel that he calls me to the work, and therefore I must not only do but endure."

At the close of the meeting I found myself so physically weak that even the weight of the $40 in silver seemed too heavy to carry to my boarding place, and the dear old "friend" was very ready to carry it for me, and from that hour he never offered any objection to my going forward in the work.

Just here I must do my own church at Hesper the justice of stating that when I laid the work, to which I felt called of the Lord, before them, their faith so measured with mine that they heartily endorsed the enterprise and lovingly recommended me to the Christian care and sympathy of all with whom I might come in contact in the canvass of the State in the interest of the prospective home for the fallen.

But little time intervening between this, our annual meeting, and the meeting of the W. C. T. U. in October, I remembered that my own district convention had not been held for which I was responsible, as I had been made president of the district although my hands were so full of my special line of work as to hardly give it a moment's thought. I then wrote to Mrs. Bulis, of Decorah, begging that she would call the convention in my name and preside over it, which she kindly did, and I find among my old papers this address to the convention:

Dear Sisters of the W. C. T. U. of the Third District in Convention Assembled: Much as I long to be with you and bear my part of the burden with you, I deem it not expedient for me to spend the money and time to come to you as I should have so soon to return to this part of the State and beyond to attend the State convention.

Digitized by Google

Although thus absent from you in body I shall be present with you in spirit, and by this letter would encourage you in every good work, feeling, as I long have, that as we continue to put our trust in God and perseveringly labor, we shall go on from victory unto victory until the monster that has invaded so many homes and threatened the overthrow of our nation, lies prostrate at our feet completely in our power. I am meeting with success in the part of the work to which I feel myself so particularly called, that as the sisters of the Union and the people in general so heartily respond to my appeal, I am led to exclaim, "Surely it is the spirit of our tender Father in Heaven that moves their hearts more than my feeble words." With a salutation of love freighted with many prayers, your sister in the work. L. B. BENEDICT.

From Oskaloosa I made my way toward Council Bluffs, prayerfully trusting that the Lord would open a way for me to make my plea before the convention at large, and that the creation and sustaining of the home would be adopted as one department of the W. C. T. U. work. On arriving at Council Bluffs the evening before the first session of the executive committee I was sent to the place assigned me to find the lady of the house from home and to be informed by her Swede girl who could scarcely speak English that the lady had not expected any company "until to-morrow." However, as it was late she said she "would make me some bed," but, as my eye canvassed the room that she had arranged for me I feared that the girl had made a great mistake for I felt quite sure that I was in the room of some invalid or some aged person and without doubt would have to give up my quarters when the lady of the house came. But as I met her in the morning, a very happy, sweet-faced woman, she pleasantly told me that her mother had gone on a visit to her children in the east and I was simply occupying her room in her absence.

I must not fail to mention the happy times that I had with her four children there, for as they were so accustomed to visits to grandma's room they seemed to take me in her place and solicited from me the stories that they thought I might tell them. Thus, while I entertained the children, I was blessed in that my own mind was diverted for a little time

Digitized by Google

from the almost crushing weight that was resting on it. For it was not until near the close of the convention that way was made, even in the executive committee, for me to make my plea, and the subject could not go before the State convention until that committee had given me leave to bring it there. But when almost everything else had been disposed of, the privilege was granted and I took the floor.

As I tremblingly commenced my plea, the lady who had been talking about the arrangements for her work and her salary broke in upon me having thought of something else she wished to say. I paused and waited until she got through and then commenced again. She let me get about so far and then again interrupted. I paused and looked at the president, but she only returned my mute appeal with a timid glance as much as to say, "I dare not call her to order for she is Mrs. Washington, loved and honored by all." So, waiting until she had ceased I made a third attempt to again be interrupted as before. At this nature gave way. I dropped the books and papers, buried my face in my handkerchief and took my seat. Then our president said with emphasis, "Mrs. Benedict has the floor," at which Mrs. W. ceased and remained silent until the plea was made. Notwithstanding there were others who regarded the work unfavorably, yet there were enough present who were in favor of my having leave to present it to the State convention to carry the motion, the privilege was granted and a half hour assigned me in which to present my work. If ever the Lord blessed me to make good use of a half hour it was that special one. I had no prepared address to present. Simply went on the stand with my wonted prayer, "Father, from the field of my knowledge bring to my remembrance just the things I ought to say." And they came with telling power and such rapidity that all the poor instrument had to do was just to stand and voice them, as I plead the possibility of the reformation and soul cleansing of fallen womanhood and their right to take their place again in society. This came to my mind for the first time, "When the Lord Jesus

Digitized by Google

cleansed Mary Magdalene he did not say, 'I have cleansed thee, but thou must forever hide away somewhere.'" No, no, but he took her right along with the company and there was a woman of note in that company, the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and again we have it recorded of Mary Magdalene that having received so great favor of the Lord she loved so much that when the chosen twelve forsook him, still Mary Magdalene was hard by, with his weeping mother last at the cross she was also earliest at the grave, and first to tell the sorrowing disciples the glad tidings of a "risen Lord." So absorbed was I in my subject that when, in my thought, I had had the floor not more than ten minutes, I was admonished that my half hour was up. But the work was done so far that when the vote was taken, my plan for a home for the unfortunate was adopted as a "step-child," I told them, for they bestowed neither love nor prayer upon it. That convention had been a marked one for its special seasons of special prayer for special subjects. It seemed to me almost everything else was prayed for while I wept because that was left out. But the thing that pierced me to the heart was yet to come. Arrangements had been made for a public presentation of the work for and among fallen women; the part assigned me and Mother Wharton, of Des Moines, who had been the pioneer of that work in her home city, was a place on the platform as a background while another lady whom Mrs. Aldrich had heard read a paper on the subject at one time was called upon for a paper. Much of it was appropriate but so much was inappropriate and damaging for a large and mixed audience that I keenly felt my cause at stake as so much depended in that city on a good presentation that evening, for I was to begin the canvass there as soon as the convention closed. So tired and disgusted was the audience, that when the paper finally came to an end, many rose to leave the house at which I sprang to my feet hoping to redeem the meeting, which had it been given to me, I have no doubt would have resulted in hundreds of dollars of value to the work. But the audience

Digitized by Google

were but fairly settled again in their seats attentively listening when some of our W. C. T. U. sisters struck up the doxology and dismissed the meeting. But such was the sympathy of many present that they quickly gathered around me and made the occasion, although such a disastrons one, of cash value to the work.

But how deeply my poor spirit was wounded I shall never tell for no words can express it. I hastened to my boarding place and sought consolation of my kind hostess. "Oh," I said, "This has surely struck the death blow to the work in your city. For how can I ever get an audience or in any way gain access to the people after a presentation like this."

I sought forgetfulness in sleep but "tired nature's sweet restorer" did not readily come to my relief, and from my short disturbed repose I was aroused by an early call from my hostess saying, "The morning paper has come and some one has kindly written up last evening's meeting putting it before the people in the best light possible, so that it might not block your way beyond the effect it had on the audience present."

The convention closed and every woman went to her own home, I alone was left in the field to meet the added barrier to my work. To my great relief I remembered that during my speech at the convention the Methodist minister was present and came quickly to my side as I took my seat, saying, "My church is open to you at any time you want it." At the same time taking two of my notes, he made them valuable, one in his own name and one in the name of his wife, to a larger amount than I thought he was able when I came to know his family cares and financial standing.

The Congregational minister had left the house in disgust ere the offensive paper was finished, so I found him inaccessible. When I appealed to the pastor of the Presbyterian church he simply said, "You will have to wait until that paper is forgotten before you can get an audience in my church."

So, aside from the congregation I was privileged to meet in the Methodist church I had to make the canvass of the city

Digitized by Google

from house to house, receiving in pledges and money some $300. I will never forget the incidents of the Sabbath previous to the one on the evening of which I presented the cause in the Methodist church. I went with Brother Collins to love-feast in the morning. It was a rainy morning so only the most devout and faithful members were present, but so blessed of the Lord were we that it was a love-feast indeed. As we were passing from the class room to that of the public audience, this came to me, that it was their quarterly meeting, the sacrament of the Lord's supper would be the closing act of the service, and as I, although acknowledging the fullness of the power of the broken body and shed blood, in reality had no part in the symbol, my duty was to go out at the close of the sermon and while the church was kneeling in that sacred rite I must preach Christ in a house of ill-fame that we had passed on our way to the church and but a little removed from it. I must confess that my human nature shrank. I had visited many houses of that character but never pushed open the tight board gate and passed in, where behind their high enclosure my life would be perfectly in their hands and might be disposed of without the world outside ever having known of it. But with the temptation to flinch came the remembrance of the protection that had been mine in other dangerous places.

I remembered as I was about to start to make my first visit to such a place I was thus admonished by a Christian lady who knew the parties I was about to visit far better than I did, "If you go to that house you will be shot." Nevertheless taking my Bible in my hand I started, trusting the Lord; having a three mile ride with an ox team before me and a river to ford and then to go into the woods out of sight of any dwelling save the abode of sin I sought to enter. As I rapped at the door, with my Bible in my hand, so far was I from being met with a revolver that I was kindly received, a hymn was sung by the dear Christian lady who accompanied me and a portion of the sacred Word attentively listened to

Digitized by Google

and when I rose from my knees at the close of an appeal to the throne of grace in their behalf there was not a dry eye. The house was soon closed and the keeper earning her living by honest industry. Her children that she was thus leading to a life of infamy having been placed under Christian care, and the young girl whose rescue was the special object of my errand honorably married some months later and she and her husband are at this time consistent members of the Methodist church.

So, like David, remembering the mercies of old, I trusted and went forward, leaving the audience at the close of the sermon and was soon standing before the tight board gate, the enemy whispering that if I dared to push it open I would surely encounter a big black dog, like the one whose snarling grimaces I had to encounter once at the door of a saloon and house of ill-fame combined. But on pushing aside the gate I found this to be a lie as his suggestions always are. Emboldened by this, I passed up the walk and rang the door bell, which was responded to by a neatly dressed young woman. On my introducing myself as a missionary in the city in the interest of a home for unfortunate girls, she led the way to the parlor where were four more all neatly attired, fine looking young women in whom I found the most attentive listeners, as I presented to them the awful life of poor girls in dens of infamy not hinting that I had the least idea that I was then standing in that kind of a place. And as I pictured to them the door of hope that I purposed to open, and the stepping stones that I was laying for their return to the path of virtue, their faces beamed with joy and hope. But we were suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the keeper whose glance as it met mine spoke anything but friendly feeling, and, as I looked at the size and seeming strength of her arm, it was very suggestive of being picked up and thrown through the panels of the door as I had heard of her treating one of the masculine persuasion a few days before. She strode past me and placed herself between me and the girls with her back

Digitized by Google

toward me, she commenced addressing me thus, "I do not want you here talking to these girls. They are no worse inside of a house than they would be outside of one and there are just as bad things outside as there are in this house." After a repetition or two of the same words she paused and I said, "Why, dear woman, I had not intimated that you had anything bad here." "No," responded one of the girls, "she had not said anything in that direction." Then I added, "I had only been telling them the awfulness of the lives of inmates in houses of ill-fame," and went on reiterating the things that I had just been telling. My ponderous antagonist was vanquished and soon retired from the room leaving me with my audience committed.

I inquired, "Girls, are you really here in a den of infamy?" to which they responded, "We are." "Well, then," I said, "girls, I am going to present your cause in Brother Collins' church on next Sabbath evening." Two of them said at the same breath, "Oh, we would love to go and hear you." But another replied, "We should be ashamed to be seen there." That told the story of their condition shut away from every sound of the gospel as completely as though they were in heathen lands.

I invariably found the inmates of those dens surprised most of all that a Christian woman should seek them in their abodes of vice.

A few days later in my canvass of the city I ventured again to push aside the tight board gate and to enter another of those sinks of iniquity. Here I was met by a very kindly greeting from the keeper as my name was announced. "Oh, I thought it was you as soon as I saw you, I was expecting a visit from you," pointing me to a seat and in every way performing the blandest hospitality and, as I told her of my purpose, she gave it a very happy assent. Taking out her pocket-book she proffered a $5 bill saying, "I will give you this much, but I am afraid you will never succeed. Christain women are so hard hearted toward these girls."

Digitized by Google

In still another of these sinful abodes I was met by the keeper with this language, "This is our business and we are going to follow it. Men that pass for respectable in this city visit us and we are going to drag in as many more as we can."

At the close of my work in Council Bluffs, I canvassed my way pretty directly toward the home of our then State president, Mrs. V. W. Moore, of Clarinda, knowing that in her I had a sympathizing friend, and a warm supporter in the work, able also to instruct me in the work of organizing, and to clothe me with the right to do so whenever I found women of any locality ready to be organized.

Stopping off on the way at the little town of Villisca and presenting myself to the landlord of the hotel as a missionary in interest of work for the fallen, he replied, "Just over here beyond the railroad track in the edge of the timber, we have a most notorious character, one of whom everybody is afraid and she has the same name with some very nice Quaker people who have recently come from Ohio and have made their home in our city. Here at once were two objects of interest. First to make the acquaintance of those of my own church and from my native State. So taking the directions given me I made my way to the home of my stranger Friends. Finding them indeed of the same name as that of the desperate character of whom I had been informed, found also that they had heard of the terrible woman and were conjecturing whether she were not the widow of a deceased relative of theirs, and own cousin to the old lady's husband. So here was a double incentive to go at once to that abode of sin where no woman had ever dared to enter save such as came under her immediate rule of vice. It cost me a long weary walk. Crossing the railroad track and passing through the point of a grove, I came to the dwelling of the woman who had been described to me as such a formidable character that I thought I was prepared to meet a hard face, but, as she opened the door, I instinctively shrank finding I was not half prepared to meet the visage that stood before me. However,

Digitized by Google

as I announced my mission in interest of the prodigal daughters of Iowa, she admitted me somewhat reluctantly. But I was used to that for I had met that kind of reception in upper tendom Christian homes oft and again, so I managed in her presence, as I had been accustomed to in theirs, to make myself as much at home as possible. But, as I proceeded to describe the sad condition of such abodes, and to plead the necessity of a refuge to which they might flee and find stepping stones back to a better life, I found her very ready to do her share of the talking so took my place much of the time, as a silent listener, while she went on to inform me of the inconsistencies that she had met in high professing Christians. She had quite a lengthy story to tell me of taking one of her girls and going to a camp meeting, and taking note of a woman who professed to have received the blessing of holiness fourteen years before and had not committed one sin since. She said, "I thought I would watch her and on taking my seat with my companion near to her and a friend of hers at a public table at dinner, she very soon began to elbow her neighbor conveying to her as to whom we were, and finally deciding who we must be. Imprecations and hard names burst from those lips from whence an hour before I had heard such high profession of holiness," and I said, "I think you are a strange sanctified woman." Shortly after there was a collection taken for a very worthy object, and while my heart was moved to the amount of two dollars, I noticed again the holy woman, who, though dressed in costly attire, cast in simply a quarter." While *I* was thinking "Out of thine own mouth will I accuse thee, for thy expressions showing such ability to discern between true Christianity and that which is only professed, witness against thee," and thinking too, "How didst thou obtain the money which thou cast in?" Yet these were thoughts and not words as I still had to listen for she had yet another story to tell of the inconsistency of high professing people. She said, "There was a rap at my door and, on opening it I immediately recognized a minister.

Digitized by Google

I knew him. I had heard him preach. But he did not know me, and told me that the object of his call was to be introduced to the girls of the house. I seated him and went out for I wanted to speak a word to the girls first. So stepping into the parlor I said to them, "When this man is ready to leave, do not let him out the front door but bring him back into the parlor and let's have some fun with him before he goes, for he is a minister, and I have heard him preach." Then, taking him to the parlor I introduced him to the girls and went again about my household cares for I do my own work. But, returning to the parlor and finding the gentleman absent, I arranged the room, placing on the center table my family Bible, for I had one. I had seen better days. I called my girls together and as the gentleman was brought back to the parlor we were all seated in order, and I arose and pointing to the Bible said, "Will you not read a chapter and pray with us before you go?" You ought to have seen how that man got out of the house. We laughed and laughed and waked up nights to laugh about it." All this time I had to stand a silent listener, not able to utter one word in contradiction for like facts had come to my knowledge oft and again during my struggle for the uplifting of the standard of purity witb the banner inscribed, "One law of purity equally binding upon man and woman." But having patiently listened until her stories were told, she seemed now more inclined to listen to me. While I had no excuse to offer in palliation of the acts of the professors that she had been holding up before me, I had a character to present undefiled. But, as I plead the man of Nazareth and my and her obligations to take Him for our pattern, to take the wondrous offering that he had made of Himself for the atonement from sins, to take the wondrous love manifested in his giving himself for our redemption, and of our duty in turn of laying our lives out for the benefit of others, she softened down and took out her pocketbook and gave me $2. Then fixing her eyes upon me as though she would look me through she began telling her

Digitized by Google

life story, and I began taking notes to see whether really her deceased husband and that of the old lady Friend were own cousins as we conjectured, and soon became convinced of the fact as she went on to say that her husband was a physician. And said, "I have not always been in this business. I have seen better days." Her husband had died leaving his business very unsettled making it necessary for her to put her affairs in the hands of a lawyer who had proceeded so far in the work as to reveal the fact that she would have about $8,000 when all was paid up. "With this," she said, "I decided to open a music store in Council Bluffs and had carried my design so far as to have rented my place of business and ordered my goods when the intelligence came that the lawyer had disappeared carrying with him all my effects. In this situation there seemed nothing to do but to cancel my order for goods and to get a release from my obligations in reference to my place of business, and to take some inexpensive rooms and engage in any sort of work that I could find to do to keep the wolf from the door.

Looking about the city for such shelter I obtained rooms over an undertaker's shop, he giving me the work of trimming coffins taking also whatever work I could get in odd jobs for the ladies of the city. But as I was thus eking out a scanty sustenance, a gentlemanly looking man approached me as I stood trimming a coffin and inquired what do you get for such a job as that?" When I informed him of the price he inquired, "How long does it take you?" On my telling him he said, "you cannot live at that." I replied, "I know it. I sometimes think that if I had had five dollars left I would have laid it out in chromos and sold them from door to door. I think I could have made a better living than I can make this way." The kindly faced gentleman thrust his hand in his pocket and took out five dollars saying, "I will lend you this. Go and try it for I am sure you can do better." In my extremity I took the five dollars and laid it out in chromos, and undertook to sell them from door to door. But after

Digitized by Google

having the door slammed in my face a few times by the ladies of the city I was disheartened. I laid my chromos by and returned to my odd jobs and coffin trimming. But how was I distressed one day as I stood at my work, on seeing my benefactor enter. I immediately began to apologize, saying, "I am sorry but I cannot refund your money for I laid it out in chromos as I designed, but have failed to sell them." "Oh," he said, "I did not come for my money. I came to see if my cousin could not stop here a while this afternoon. She is in from the country and it is raining so hard she cannot return." I knew it was raining hard and I was glad to accommodate him so told him to bring his cousin in. He soon returned with a very beautiful young girl who remained with me until near evening when the gentleman again came back, saying, "It is still raining so hard, I came to ask if you will keep my cousin all night." I replied, "I have nothing to set for her supper. For half a loaf of bread and cold water is all that my larder affords. He took out another five dollars and said, "Go and get something to eat and the cousin staid that night and several nights, and I found what she was there for, and I found too, that there was a living in it and from that day to this I have kept that kind of a boarding house. But here, take my address and give me yours. I want to keep in communication with you for I feel now as though I would like to give every dollar I possess to such a home as you describe."

Concluding thus her life story which she had ventured to trust me with, she said "You may tell this story if you can do any good with it. I only ask that you will not tell it in connection with my name in this place."

But the description that I had given of a home was not a real home but one that was yet only a creature of my brain.

What joy it would have been to my heart there and then to have a home in reality so that I might not only have proffered it to this woman, but especially to the young girl who had sat close by us listening to every word as I had had been portraying my prospective home and the stepping stones by

Digitized by Google

which the poor sin-sick prostitute might return to honorable life and an acknowledged place in the church of the world's great Redeemer.

But the home was no reality, so I must leave them as I found them. But how appealingly those beautiful eyes of that young girl looked into mine as she clung to my hand as though she could not bear to let go her grasp. Now, dear reader, I have told, this story because of the points involved in it.

First. The double standard of virtue. That minister was not branded by his visit there. An hour from that time, perhaps he was in the sacred desk no one knowing of his sin. And if there was any rumor of criticism 1 witness it would have been hushed with, "Do not mention such a thing in connection with that man's name." But that woman with one of her girls could not sit down at a public table without being pointed out and shunned by high professing Christain women instead of good Samaritan like going to them with the oil and the wine of the kingdom by which all their malady of sin might have been healed.

Second. Comes the common fault of a wife's ignorance of her husband's business.

Third. Her right to manage affairs in case of his death equally with his right to manage them in case of hers. If this woman had been possessed of this knowledge and the right to settle her own affairs there would have been no need of placing them in the hands of the lawyer and he would not have had the chance of making away with her last dollar and she never would have come to the extremity of undertaking to earn her own living at kinds of work, the price of which is so jewed down even by woman dealing with her sister woman, that to do her best the woman thus situated can live only at a miserable starving rate in which situation the tempter found, not only this poor woman but thousands upon thousands who are annually going down through this very trap door. And again, the first five dollars she took innocently and honora-

Digitized by Google

bly as a loan and had she only been met with kindness and patronage as she presented herself at the houses of the ladies of the city with her chromos, she would have been able to have paid the loan when the tempter made his second appearance, and probably would have had no further acquaintance with him. But finding her still in the same starving condition his second five dollars was taken and through it she learned as she said what the beautiful girl was brought to her for, and that there was a living in it, and through that means she had obtained not only a living but the possession of what would be, in virtuous life, a very comfortable home. And, under the benign influence of the gospel as it had been presented to her in the person of Christ Jesus divested of all the false presentations made by his professed followers, she was ready to proffer it with every dollar she possessed to the proposed door of escape to the unfortunate victims she had been sheltering there. But how was all this purpose for good dispoiled but a short time after, by a raid that was made upon her and the "pulling of the house," as the common expression of the police is, and her heart again hardened and was made as flinty toward community as was that of community toward her.

To break up this state of things has all along been my purpose. To plead with woman to deal more kindly with her sister woman; to pay her more liberally for the work she does, especially if she be in destitute circumstances; and to pay her promptly at the time it is due. One thing I always made a rule, and I would it might be a rule with all, that no destitute woman should have to wait over one night for her pay for any service that she had rendered me.

I call to mind just now one Saturday evening of coming to my home, after a few hours' absence, and finding that a poor lady who was struggling to maintain her five children with her needle, had returned a piece of work in my absence, and, although twilight was fast gathering, I could not rest for the thought came, "How do I know that this woman will have bread for to-morrow unless she is paid for that work to-night."

Digitized by Google

So, though weary, I did not allow myself to rest until I had placed the money due in the hands of her to whom it belonged, and how were my fears verified as I saw her little girl start out at once to purchase the things necessary for to-morrow's supply of food.

I throw this in as only a thing that was my duty to do in hopes that it may not only meet the eye of thousands whom I shall never see but that it may touch a ready response in their hearts to go and do likewise. Dear reader, we women are not half aware in how much we are our sisters' keepers, or in how much the men are keepers of us all, so long as they alone have the power to make the laws that govern us and control our interests. Many times the woman, who should see to it that her sister woman is promptly paid, is powerless to do so for the reason that her liege lord takes care that the necessary means is kept out of her hands save as he from time to time, pleases to dole it out to her in response to her cringing appeal, feeling herself almost in the humiliating position of a beggar. I do not say that all husbands are of this kind for I know better from real life experience for the lifetime contract that I entered into implied, as it always should, an equal partnership in business while we both lived, and the perfect control of all that we possessed should I be left to bear the burden alone that we had shared together. So that, while I had to learn the bitter lesson of what it was to bear that burden alone, I did not have to take it up with fettered hands as did the subject of the foregoing narrative, or as did a particular friend of mine in whose case the sudden death of her husband left her to the merciful or rather unmerciful provisions of the law. She was but a silent partner in the connubial firm with no power to transact business, all power having been, by law, vested in her husband, who, though now silent in his grave, had left her with six children to be provided for, with business matters pending that required prompt action in order to prevent great loss as nearly all he possessed was vested in mill property liable at any time to be damaged

Digitized by Google

by flood even when promptly cared for. An opportunity for an advantageous sale came, but had to be passed by for the want of the right on her part to make a title. A flood came that did not pass her by and great damage was sustained. Next came great depreciation in mill property. All this time, now near two years, a mortgage had been eating and the court had been haggling away at the settling of the estate giving some flimsy excuse at each term as to why the business was not attended to, until in loss by flood, depreciation in value, and eating of mortgages there seemed nothing else to do but to yield to the foreclosure and the work was done. The widow and her children were penniless. Whereas, could she have had the power to act in case of her husband's death as he would have had in like case sufficient might have been saved to provide them a good home. The reader will not be surprised that this made an impression on my mind sufficient to give it a place here could he or she know the burden that fell upon me in caring for the poor woman and her family so crushed beneath this unnecessarily added burden that for a time reason was driven from its throne.

Leaving Villisca I was soon after in the home and nestling close to the heart of Mrs. V. W. Moore, our worthy State president who for a time laid all other business aside and gave undivided attention to arranging and planning for the furtherance of my department, which she realized, as I did, had only been adopted by the State W. C. T. U. as a sort of stepchild which had to take its place secondary to every other department. As these were the days of the infancy of the Iowa W. C. T. U., I thought it quite a privilege to copy from her maps of the State the dotted lines that divided it into districts, and also the starring of every town on my map that was indicated on hers as one in which there was a local union. Finding her ready to clothe me with authority for organizing, and to furnish me with the copies of the constitution. I was enabled, after having held a large and valuable meeting in

Digitized by Google

interest of the work, to leave Clarinda better equipped than ever before.

Though as heretofore mentioned my own church gave me good credentials at the first recommending me to the people of Iowa, and soon after starting out Governor Gear gave me like recommendations, yet hitherto I had received no papers from the W. C. T. U. that were calculated to assure the strangers to whom I came that I was in any way connected with it.

By this time the chilling blasts of November were giving strong hints of the coming winter. I canvassed along the line of the C. B., & Q., taking in Red Oak and Creston. At the former place I very seriously offended a landlady by referring to the danger to which girls were exposed in hotels, but her expression of offense only brought out the fact that there were at that time a large number of prostitutes occupying the third story of their hotel which was in reality a house of prostitution, the keeping of which would be a penitentiary offense under our present law.

At Creston the first installment of stern winter struck me, I say struck me, for the cold not only pierced me through, but the wind almost took me off my feet as I stepped off the cars. Notwithstanding this I did good work there, aided by the ministers of the city one of whom gave to me the hospitality of his home. I remember as my little note was presented and collection being taken at the close of my public address, one of the ministers called my attention, saying, "There is a runner here who wants to speak"; I said, "Let him do so, for as a rule the runners know the need of shelter for those fallen ones." The runner's speech was short but to the point concluding with, I want to be one of twenty to raise a hundred dollars. I will give the first five and my friend here will give the last five so in a very few moments a hundred dollars had been added to what had already been given and pledged, amounting to nearly another hundred.

Among my contests with old Boreas during that first winter was a blizzard that struck Charles City just at the hour

Digitized by Google

for their W. C. T. W. meeting in which arrangements were to be made for my appointment. Only three of us who were a little early reached the place of meeting where we waited and wondered how we were to get to our respective quarters. On first arriving in the city, not knowing any of the W. C. T. U. ladies, I went directly to the post office to make inquiry, where for the first time I met my now long time friend, B. F. Wright, who, with his estimable wife kindly gave to me the shelter of their hospitable home. But the question now was, how I should get there through the blinding storm. Fortunately a butcher's delivery team came within calling distance, one of the ladies hailed it and got me on board, but after being taken as near as I could by team, I had to wade a drift of snow nearly two feet deep that had fallen since I left the house a few hours before, and my meeting was not yet arranged for, of which I was glad on Sabbath morning as I found myself barely able to speak above my breath. However Brother F. T. Miller, pastor of the M. E. church, having heard for what purpose I had come to the city waded the drifts and proffering his church persuaded me to risk my voice, and accept an appointment for the evening. So with the aid of Brother Wright, tramping the drifts before me, I made my way to the morning service and during the afternoon was nursed by a good sister living near the church, so that by evening I was able to make my pleading for the fallen at least with good success, financially. For I had not only a good collection, but seventy-five dollars pledged. Thus canvassing steadily from city to city until the session of the executive committee in April, 1881, I was able to make such an encouraging report of money pledged and of each collection running so far ahead of my expenses as to suggest to the sisters the possibility and feasibility of undertaking to raise money on shorter notice, and not waiting until the $20,000 was pledged before securing and opening the Home. To this arrangement I readily assented. As this matter was settled Mrs. Aldrich looked up as though a very important thought had struck her

Digitized by Google

and said, "Without doubt Mrs. Benedict is the woman to raise the money for this work, but she has no financial ability. We shall have to appoint a superintendent," and they hung about my neck the, to them, much needed officer, but an officer who was to me, in the work, much like the help Sinbad the sailor found in the old man of the sea. And they also selected a woman whose incompetency was so apparent when she made her report at the next annual meeting, that they dropped her so hastily that I really felt it a duty to go to her with words of kindness to soothe her wounded spirit. But in this removal I found no relief for another was appointed from whose judgment and power I suffered in the hindrance to the work before the coming Legislature by her withholding the petitions asking that prostitution be made a penitentiary offense and that a reformatory prison for women be provided for, by Legislative action. For, in my canvass of the State, from the first, I had been presenting the necessity of this change of code and such reformatory prison in connection with the need of a reformatory home to which all might flee who desired maternal shelter and reformation.

My plans were to have the petition in the field in due season and in pursuance to this had it passed upon by the executive committee in October and had the manuscript heading in my hand thinking but a few days would elapse ere I would be sending it out into the field when my superintendent stretched out her hand saying, "Let me take that and I will put it in the field." So trusting it to her charge as was my duty to my superior, I went on with my canvassing telling the women everywhere I spoke that the petition for change of code and for a reformatory prison for women would soon be sent to them, and I wanted them to move quickly, so that all of them surely would be in at the opening of the Legislative session, that they might be there to be passed into the House and Senate from time to time as remembrances of our wants, and as a support to our bills providing for the same. But time passed on, and still the petition was not in the field.

Digitized by Google

Growing almost impatient I wrote to my superintendent inquiring why it was not sent out? as I had been promising it everywhere and it had not come? I got this answer back, "You had better go on convassing for money in the interest of the Home, and I will attend to that."

I will leave the reader to judge of my disappointment and distress, as I came down to the extra meeting of the executive committee in Des Moines called in interest of our work before the Legislature then in session, to find that not only the petition had never been sent out, but that there was a strong determination on the part of my superintendent and the executive officers in general that it never should be. As I plead that the petition must go out for I had already sent out a circular letter to the members of the Legislature descriptive of the sad condition of our State, permeated, as it was, with dens of infamy and appealing to them for a change of code and for a reformatory prison suited to the reformation of such as might otherwise be sentenced to the penitentiary. I was strongly rebuked for having done this much in advance without having first consulted them. My presumptious appeal, however, was read and passed upon as a letter of value after all, despite my injudicious aspirations. I will give the readers the benefit of the letter before attempting to tell the struggle that it cost to get the endorsement of the executive committee in reference to going before the Legislature.

WOMAN'S PLEA FOR WOMAN—NOT FOR THE BALLOT BUT FOR A REFORMATORY.

In behalf of the Mothers of our State I beg leave to address you as an honorable member of our coming Legislature, calling your attention to the rapid increase of prostitution, and to the vast number of houses of ill-fame kept open regardless of law, victimizing both our sons and daughters and not only bringing many to an untimely grave, but entailing on community disease that will inevitably go down to coming generations. This sad destruction and depravity has become such a burden to my heart as to lead me to pledge my life to the work of raising the means of providing a home for the poor girls who say to me as I visit them in those sinks of vice: "We would gladly leave this awful life if there

Digitized by Google

were any refuge to which we could flee." This humane enterprise has been espoused by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and wherever the cause is presented the response financially is such as to warrant us in opening, in our capital city, a place of refuge for all who are willing to come. This is as far as we, the mothers, can go in the plan for remedy.

Now, we appeal to the fathers, whom you will represent in our Legislature, for a provision for a class who will not come. Of those, there are two classes—one so under the power of strong drink as never to think intelligently for themselves; the other a class who boldly say, "We are in this business for the money there is in it, and it is our business and we are going to follow it. Men who pass as respectable visit us, and we are going to make just as many new victims as we can." Which simply means that our boys are to be decoyed into those dens of soul and body thieves, and there educated for the fiendish purpose of seducing our innocent daughters, and thus furnishing a succession of those fallen ones who, though fallen, possess such power to destroy.

I have taken this timely opportunity of presenting this to you that you may give thought to the necessity of changing the code of Iowa so that any person convicted of keeping a house of ill-fame shall be committed for a term of *not less than three nor over five years;* and any woman convicted of prostitution shall be committed for a term of *not less than one nor over three years;* and also to the necessity of an appropriation for a Woman's Industrial Reformatory Prison, the officers of which shall be women, as facts prove that women are not reformed by being confined in our penitentiaries under the care of men. On the contrary, in the Woman's Prison at Indianapolis, *reports show eighty per cent reformed.*

While our new penitentiary at Anamosa is so well arranged for men, the provision, *or lack of provision,* for women, is such as to shock common decency, there being no other alternative but to consign them to cells in the same row with the male prisoners. So circumstanced, it is vain to even hope for reformation, especially of the class above referred to.

Submitted in behalf of the Mothers of Iowa.

MRS. L. B. BENEDICT.

I plead that I had gone forward only step by step as I felt called of the Lord to do, and, while to them the objects of my desire no doubt seemed impossible as the whole project did from the first, men approved, yes, and applauded the steps I was taking in interest of my own sex often saying, "You are doing the right thing now. Why did you not do it before? We have often wondered why you women were so anxious

Digitized by Google

for reforming men and doing nothing for your own sex," while women were saying, "It cannot be done. Men will never give you such a law, and at this time we must concentrate all our forces on the prohibitory amendment bill for the suppression of the saloon."

The time was set, however, for me to make my pleading before the executive committee. My only refuge and strength as I took the floor was in the fact that one with the Lord was a majority and by faith I could hear the voice of the Spirit saying, "Thou shalt have the desire of thy heart. Trust in me and I will bring it to pass." My strong point was, that I had raised so much of the money then in the bank towards the purchase of grounds for the home on the promise that I would make prostitution a penitentiary offense in Iowa. There are hundreds of women that gave their money with the thought of helping me to punish them rather than for the building of a refuge to shelter them, and, if I failed to bring the subject before the Legislature then in session my word would be gone, all over the State. I could not go on soliciting for the Home without keeping my promise to those who had already pledged.

Reminded, as I often had to be, that I had consumed my time I closed my argument and a vote on the subject was called for which resulted in victory on my side, and once more I was privileged to have the manuscript of the petition. But my joy was of short duration for before the close of that session my superintendent gave notice that we must have a rehearing.

Then again came the pleading for and against, and I do not wonder that it seemed preposterous to those noble, educated women that an old uneducated woman of so small dimensions should presume to be called of the Lord to stand before legislators. And yet again to me the power of the Lord prevailed and the vote came out on my side, and I very soon had my manuscript in the hands of a printer, and ere the day closed had a roll of them ready for signatures. But my cup of

Digitized by Google

suffering was not yet full, for notice was given calling for a rehearing in the next morning meeting of the committee. I must confess, that notwithstanding Divine support, the flesh suffered to that degree that as I laid my head upon my pillow that night it seemed to me that every separate part of my brain was a separate throb, and I looked up to my Father in heaven with the query, "Oh, my Father, why? This is taking more of my physical strength than would months of hard work for the Home. My answer came as a pale light moving down slowly until it stood before me and then came the word, "For this purpose came I to this hour." I remembered that my life was pledged and answered back in the language of my master, "Father, glorify thy name." In an instant every particle of suffering of mind and body was gone and I soon slept as sweet as an infant, and when I awoke in the morning felt so fresh and ready for the contact that I was really in haste to meet my opposers. As I entered the committee room I found myself a little late for the morning devotions as the scripture reading was nearly at the close, and then part of that blessed hymn, "Jesus, Lover of my soul was sung," closing with the stanza.

> "All my trust on Thee is staid, all my help from Thee I bring,
> Cover, my defenseless head, with the shadow of thy wing."

And being called on to make the opening prayer, I went down on my knees with this cry, "Oh my father, cover *my* defenseless head, with the shadow of thy wing." As we rose from our knees my subject was again taken up and after a short discussion the vote was again called for which resulted again in my favor, on which I asked to be excused from the committee for a little time.

All along I had hoped to be in time with my petition to get the signatures of *the* representative men and women of the State who were then holding a great temperance meeting in support of our prohibition bill. The president of the meeting, being my old time friend, B. F. Wright of Charles City, gave me the courage to ask the privilege of passing my peti-

Digitized by Google

tion quietly up and down along the rows of seats during one of the sessions. With the aid of two or three friends of the work the petition was circulated and the signatures obtained of all present except one old man who was too blind to read it and too deaf to hear it read.

Successful so far, yet but half the battle was fought, for there was yet pending before the executive committee the question of purchasing the grounds on which the Home now stands.

My Dear friends Addison and Rebecca Naylor having held at our refusal the property until they thought they could not hold it any longer which to me made it exceedingly important that trustees be appointed at that session, and that they have the right given them to draw from the Home fund the amount necessary to satisfy their claim. This so exhausted the whole stock of faith of so many of the members of the executive committee as to draw out all the powers of persuasion that I was capable of using. When a conclusion was finally reached and Mrs. Callanan on whom had devolved the office of acting trustee came in for the signatures of the president and secretary to give her the right to draw the money from the bank and complete the bargain, the physical was so drawn upon leaving the spiritual so nearly unclothed that I thought then and have often thought since that the dear sister would never look more like an angel when I met her in heaven than she did at that time. The battle before the excutive committee being fought and victory won, now came the reaction. The sense of responsibility that now rested upon me as to what I would gain before that session of the legislature, I saw clearly, and so expressed it in my pleading to the committee, that coming in so late I did not expect to succeed, but was willing to go alone and fail alone if they would but allow me the privilege of going at all to keep my word with the people of Iowa who had pledged their money on my promise. But I did expect so to move the legislature as to gain friends to the cause and get a favorable recommendation for the future.

Digitized by Google

Pursuant to this I sent out my petitions begging the quickest possible movement in obtaining signatures and returning them. I entered the legislature for the first time as a lobbyist knowing that this would so absorb me during its session that the work of raising money for the Home would have to be suspended. And now having gained at the hand of the executive committee the boon I so much craved, the securing of the coveted grounds, yet I had not enough money in bank to meet the whole payment.

Brother Naylor's price for the acre and an eighth with a house of eight rooms was $1,700. He and his wife kindly donated $200 which brought the cash value down to $1,500 only $900 of which went to him as there was a mortgage of $600 upon it and while it was not due for three years yet I felt the weight of responsibility concerning that debt that I have no language to describe.

My superintendent told me at the final close of the executive committee meeting that I would get them in debt and in trouble, and she only wished we were back in committee meeting and she would put her foot upon the whole of it. It was the weight of that foot, the lack of faith and sympathy with those prominent sisters of the union that was crushing me down. But oh, how was my burden lightened on receiving a letter from Mrs. Aldrich saying, "Oh, Mrs. Benedict, I should think you would rejoice now since Mrs. Sinclair has sent you $500," for this was the sum in fact, but as it was given in figures I thought it too good to be true, and wondered if the decimals might not be carried out, so wrote back to Mrs. Aldrich saying, "I cannot tell by thy figures whether to rejoice $5.00, $50.00 or $500 worth." Back came a quick reply, "It is $500," but I had received nothing. My mail was being forwarded to me from Decorah, so I wrote quickly to all the places to which I had ordered mail forwarded and struck my prize at Marshalltown. This was relief and relief indeed for I had now not only enough to cancel the mortgage, but would have over $200 left towards the seven eighths of an

Digitized by Google

acre that had been sold off from the original premises, without which the line ran to within a few feet of the house. I had become very desirous to be so situated that no parties opposed to the Home could plant themselves very near to us.

In this, the first thing that stared me in the face as a thing insurmountable was the framing of my bills asking for change of code and for a reformatory prison. But this mountain soon became a molehill in the hand of the Hon. J. A. Harvey of Des Moines for which I can never cease to thank him, for the good man really took from the hours that were nature's due for rest in doing that which I could not do. As I now remember my bills were presented by the Hon. Hubbell of Allamakee.

Being thus relieved from anxiety in regard to the finances of the Home I turned my attention faithfully to the work of a lobbyist, to get my bills framed, and as petitions began to come in I succeeded in getting the committees of the penitentiaries of Anamosa and Fort Madison and the reformatory school at Mitchellville consolidated as a committee to whom the petitions were referred and on whom devolved the consideration of the merit of the bill. But it is not worth while for me to attempt to depict the heart burden or the humiliation that was mine as the days and weeks went by in which I climbed the slippery hill to the old capitol, for the hill was indeed slippery during the whole session, at times by frost and again by mud.

I had to be on hand early in the morning to pass in petitions as they came in slowly from the State, and remain late at night in order to know when and where the committee would meet that had the charge of my interest. Fashionable ladies would come at a fashionable hour and go at a fashionable hour, but the "little old woman in black" was there early and late feeling herself very much alone. And notwithstanding there was a committee appointed by the W. C. T. U. to assist me in the work and especially to go with me when I should make my plea before the legislative committee, when

Digitized by Google

the time came I would have gone entirely alone before a committee of thirty men but for the wife of one of the representatives, Mrs. Wilson of Algona, who expressed, her appreciation of the plea made, in this wise, "I would not have missed that opportunity for forty dollars," which according to her estimate suggested loss to those whose duty it was to have been present. This watching, waiting, and lobbying alone was made all the more gloomy by the fact that the most I could hope for at the close was a favorable recommendation. I will never forget the temptation of the enemy that came to me as I was sitting watching for the moment when the chairman would have the opportunity given by the speaker of the House to make his report. It was the last session of the legislature except one and things going on as they generally do, so near the close. Everybody clamoring for a hearing upon "*my bill*" when the enemy came to me saying, "You are only barely getting a recommendation after all, and you will have this all to go over again. You will have to walk and talk for the work for two years more. Your petitions will have to be sent out, and your lobbying will all have to be done over again. You never can stand it to go through another two years like the past." Yielding for a moment I confess I weighed the suggestion with a fainting heart. I can see even now the spot where I sat as I leaned back against the wall of the old capitol faltering, even bordering on despair, when another voice addressed me thus, "If Rizpah could watch her dead sons all through the burning summer months of Palestine canst thou not watch for the interest of the living sons and daughters of Iowa?" I answered back, "Yes, Lord, I can." In an instant every particle of mental and physical weariness was gone and I felt just as fresh for two years more service as I had at the first.

It had been so long since I had read the story from which the suggestion came that when I opened my Bible, my constant companion, to re-read the story of Rizpah, I did not find it readily and thought, "Did I read the story of Rizpah

Digitized by Google

in the Bible or did I read it in some other book?" But looking more closely I found and read that the persistent watchfulness of mother love over the dead sons so moved the heart of the king that he gathered their bones and buried them. And I said, "If my persistent manifestation of mother love for the sons and daughters of Iowa will but move the powers that be to give the desired law and reformatories needed, I reconsecrate myself to the work."

My soliloquy was soon interrupted by the Speaker of the House leaving some one else in the chair and coming around to do a little lobbying for a bill in which he was interested, with some parties near where I was sitting, I ventured to call his attention to the fact that the chairman was ready to report upon the subject for which I had been so faithfully lobbying during the winter, and was only waiting his recognition. He replied with emphasis, "He shall be recognized tomorrow morning."

And, true to his word, the recognition came notwithstanding there were many clamoring at the same time to be heard. The report was given in the following language:

"Your joint committee on penitentiaries at Anamosa and Fort Madison, and Reform school at Mitchellville, beg leave to report that they have had under consideration the numerous petitions presented to this house by the W. C. T. U., and report that there is much of merit in the matter presented in said petitions, and in the opinion of the committee the time has fully come when the civilization and christianity of the age demand that a separate prison shall be provided where females, convicted of crime, can be confined separate and apart from the prison where male convicts are incarcerated, and in connection therewith a reformatory school be should provided, to the end that as much as possible reformation females of therein confined may be attained. The committee point with pride to a prison of said character in Indiana, and believe that the State of Iowa cannot do better than at the earliest possible day provide a similar reformatory prison. Your committee regret the fact that the session is so far advanced as to preclude any steps being taken at this time that would attain this desirable object, and your committee confidently believe that at any early day the legislature of the State of Iowa will take proper steps and enact a law establishing an institution or prison of the kind

Digitized by Google

referred to, which shall harmonize with the light and advancement of the age."

Thus I had obtained all I could reasonably hope for considering all the obstacles that had to be overcome ere the work could be presented to the legislature. Having been thus blessed in my initiative work in the legislature in the doing of which I had kept my word with those to whom I had given the promise that I would make the effort, I turned again cheerfully to the work of soliciting the needed funds for the Home for unfortunates, in which I was so successful that in August, 1882, it was formally opened having secured a Mrs. Babcock as matron.

I will never forget the mingled sense of joy and fear that possessed my soul as the intelligence reached me that the Home was not only open but one unfortunate had sought its shelter, and that her name was Tilly Petit. In this I recognized the girl I had rescued from the hands of the saloon keeper whom I thought equal to any crime. Therefore my first thought was, "John Dame will burn us out."

I immediately wrote to the Home inquiring, "Is it my Tilly Petit?" and got the answer back, "You bet, it is your Tilly Petit." But my fears of John Dame were exceedingly allayed as she went on to say that he was safe in the penitentiary.

I was at that time in Tabor, in the southwestern part of the State, and much as I longed for the privilege of entering the Home and viewing the order that had been brought out of chaos, for bundles, boxes, furniture, and bedding had been for sometime coming there from unions in different parts of the State, the contents of which, I fancied, in complete home-like order, yet I could not afford to spend either time or means, save as I canvassed my way. So it was not until in October that I had the coveted privilege of entering the Home which had now been open six weeks. Still there was but one inmate.

I found in the person of the matron a woman who measured up to my idea as qualified to fill her position, so full was

Digitized by Google

BENEDICT HOME.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

her heart of love and interest in the work of the redemption of these lost ones.

An instance that I will never forget increased my faith in her. When I arrived the wife of a wealthy neighbor was in conversation with the matrom in the parlor. After her departure the matron told me of how surprised the lady was on learning that she had not provided herself with a revolver as she thought it so dangerous for her to preside over such an Institution without such protection. To this the matron had replied, "I should be more afraid of the revolver than I should of anything the Lord will permit to come to us here." It was this trust in God instead of human defense that so harmonized with my idea of the spirit that should guide and govern such an Institution. Forty-eight hours had not elapsed until, oh! how the danger of the revolver was verified as the intelligence came to us that the only child of the revolver trusting neighbor accidentallly shot himself while examining the deadly weapon to assure himself that it was in good order for his defense during a trip from home that he was about to make.

During this short stay at the Home we were aroused by a midnight rap at the door. The matron not waking I arose and opening an upper door inquired, "Who is there?" and got the answer back, "Silas Berry" (the then secretary of the Y. M. C. A.), "Mrs. Blank and a girl that wants to enter the home." As I hastened to admit them, I mentally exclaimed, "I have at last a home where I have the right to open the door and to say to the poor sin-sick prostitute, come in." And as I remember now the joy of that moment I cannot conceive of being richer when I enter my mansion in heaven than I was in the possession of a home for such a purpose. Having aroused the matron we sat for a few moments in conversation in the parlor when that young man but a little past his teens said, "Let us have a season of prayer before we go," thus leading us mothers down on our knees for a midnight prayer meeting that we shall never forget. At the close Mrs.——

Digitized by Google

and Mr. Berry retired and it was my privilege to take the girl to her room, newly furnished, so of course clean and in good order. As she entered and looked around she exclaimed, "Is it possible that I shall wake up to-morrow morning in a place that I can call home?" While thus alone with her I inquired why they came so late and what instance had led to her coming. To this she replied, "As I was sitting in my room in the Kirkwood this morning the door to my room, and also that of the room on the opposite side of the hall, was open, and I observed a nice looking young man and catching his glance I threw him the signal. He immediately arose stepped into my room saying as he came, "You are too nice a looking young woman to be out in a life like this," I replied "But I am out and what can I do?" to which he answered, "My faith is that if you will go to the Y. M. C. A. meeting this afternoon, there will be some one there to take charge of you," and he did not leave my room until I had promised I would go. His promise gave rise to hope and I attended the meeting in expectation of some way of deliverance from the life I was leading. But as the meeting closed and the audience dispersed, no one having paid any attention to me, despair took possession of me. The tears were soon running down my cheeks. I buried my face in my handkerchief and still kept my seat. At that moment the dear lady that came out here with me, came to me asking what was the matter. I told her my story in brief at which she kindly said, "Come, go home with me." And as it was now very dark and rainy, she thought we could not well go out to the home without some one to return with her. Her husband being ill she had to wait until a late hour before she could secure the attention of the young man who came with us. Later I learned from the dear sister that just about the hour and moment that the young man promised the poor girl that if she would attend the Y. M. C. A. meeting that afternoon she would have some one to take care of her, the voice of the Spirit whispered in her (Mrs. Blank's) mental ear, "go to the Y. M. C. A. meet-

Digitized by Google

ing this afternoon." Her plans were all laid to the contrary having arranged to attend a mission meeting in the suburbs of the city. She tried to dismiss it but it continued to be repeated in her ear, "Go to the Y. M. C. A. meeting this afternoon." She accepted it and abandoning former arrangements obeyed. The meeting closed and she saw no reason why she should have been sent there, but as she was stepping over the threshold with her faith somewhat shaken as to its being the voice of the Lord that directed her there, she turned and looked back into the room to see if there was any object there that should claim her attention when her eye fell upon a young girl weeping. She immediately took her under care.

I pause here to say of this servant of the Lord that she feared not to be seen in the company of the unfortunate; neither did she flinch from taking her to her own house until she could make the arrangements with the young secretary of the Y. M. C. A. to accompany them to the Home. And now comes the reward of simple obedience of faith as she listened to the story of the young girl as to by whom and when she was directed to go to the Y. M. C. A. meeting, and of the promise that the Christian young man of that order had made her as to finding some one there that would care for her.

In this was assurance beyond doubt that she had been spoken to by the Holy Spirit that morning in answer to the prayer of faith that had gone up from the heart of the young man as he gave the assurance that inspired the hope of deliverance from a life of sin in a soul for whom Christ died.

Our family in the Home now consisted of the matron and two unfortunates taken from off the evil road. It was not long, however, until there were new arrivals in the person of those who had not gone so far down but had taken the first misstep that had brought them into prospective motherhood. This involved sickness and hard work and those two girls who had been so unaccustomed to labor were brought into active service, for the heaviest work of the house fell upon them and

Digitized by Google

they were performing it faithfully until the Board of Managers in their lack of faith that the needed supplies would come, cut down their bill of fare so closely as to take from their table, for part of the time at least, some of the common articles of food. Having given the order that they could not have butter only on certain days, the girls were surprised one morning by the order of the matron that the butter must be removed from the table, and on their refusal to comply as they would have nothing but codfish, bread and coffee left, the matron feeling the necessity of obeying the direction of the Board removed it herself. At this the hard worked girls were angry saying, "If it has come to this that we cannot have comfortable food while working as hard as we do, we are going down town."

Notwithstanding they were admonished that if they went down town they would be in Polk county jail before morning, they were persistent in their determination.

Just here I see the average woman start and look up with surprise and indignation saying, "I should think they ought to be satisfied with anything, and how low they must be to go back to their former evil way of living after being so kindly sheltered in the Home.

But from my standpoint I would say, let us pause and consider. Here we have two girls who have been used to the stimulus of morphine, brandy, arsenic, nicotine, yes and alcohol in all of its various forms. Cut off from all of these, how little conception can we form of their suffering. I call to mind the expression of Colonel Woodford, our far-famed temperance lecturer in reference to the necessity of nourishing food for the reformed inebriate. Although at that time many years had passed since his reformation and he had long been in the field as a temperance exponent, he said, "I still have to be very careful to have my meals in their regular season and food of the most nourishing kind, as any neglect in this, brings back the old appetite for strong drink.

Digitized by Google

Oh! how much we hear said about providing Institutions for men inebriates where they are surrounded by every comfort and with everything the appetite demands, alcohol alone excepted. And even these favorable circumstances fail in many instances to save the poor victim from falling again into the coils of the serpent of the still. And yet, we would sit in stern judgment on these girls as we see them in anger don their wraps and start down town where they only had to signal one of Solomon's simple ones in order to get money to provide them the stimulus that appetite had been so long clamoring for. To me they have simply been overpowered by force of circumstances. I have no criticisms to offer but on the lack of faith in those to whom the management of the Home was intrusted. It is true I had been called aside from my money gathering business for a little time by the sickness of my own daughter which is some apology for the fear that had arisen that the funds would fail. It was just here in this narrow place when I was feeling such deep anxiety myself in regard to the finances, that I was induced to respond in the affirmative to the appeal of an interested lady begging that she might put my picture on sale for a benefit to the Home. Her request came with this assurance, "I could make money out of your picture for that Home provided you would have it taken with that quaint hood of yours." This explains why the Quaker bonnet is always present with the picture of "Mother Benedict's" face. I confess that at first I shrank from the thought of having my picture sold and yet when I remembered that I had pledged my whole being I thought my shadow could not be much to throw in. So I consented and in a very little time the shadow was stalking on, raising money for the Home, while the real was so necessarily kept from the field.

But to return to the girls whom we will call Hattie and Nellie and whom we left in the hands of the tempter. Procuring their brandy and securing a room they so gave themselves up to the beverage that in a little time Hattie saw that

Digitized by Google

Nellie could not walk much longer so tucked her snugly in bed, while she went out for more brandy. I had known Hattie for four years and heard her say that at seventeen she could drink glass for glass with two men and walk when they could not. But now, as then, she could walk when her brain was so addled as to make her a perfect Topsy. She soon became so noisy as to attract the attention of the police, and as he had made her his prey and was leading her to jail, she off with her hat and swinging it aloft cried, "Hurrah for the Benedict Home. Polk county jail for sure." I will leave the reader to imagine the feelings of "Mother Benedict" when she learned of her name being thus blended with the vile and ridiculous and this much of victory gained to the side of the average woman who is continually saying to her, "It is no use. They are past hope. You cannot reform them. You may as well let them go on and down."

But it was well for the cause and well for the poor girls that the Board saw their mistake and were glad to give them another trial.

As soon as Nellie awoke from her stupor she so realized the awfulness of entering again upon the terrible life from which she had so lately escaped that she made her way in the quickest possible time to the door of the Home and rapped again for admittance. She was kindly taken in, and meanwhile the Board had been telephoned that Hattie was in jail and kindly went to her rescue. This over it was but a little time until their appetite for strong drink was aroused by the sight and smell of brandy brought into the Home by a physician as a remedy for another unfortunate who had been thrown in jail in a fit of tremens and had there fought demons until she had almost entirely denuded herself and lay cold as in death and senseless on the floor of that loathsome place when the attention of the Board of managers of the Home was called to her. They coming to her aid wrapped her carefully to protect the little life that remained, and placing her in the ambulance, she was soon conveyed to the Home. Hattie and

Digitized by Google

Nellie performing the task assigned them of chafing her benumbed limbs, bathing and warming her back to life again.

When consciousness left her she was fighting demons: As it dawned again upon her she was in the presence of her faithful nurses in a well arranged room and in a comfortable bed, and looking dreamily around she inquired, "Is this heaven?"

Just here the county physician arrived. He thinking it must be his duty to attend the patient as she was taken from jail, assumed the responsibility of the case, ordering brandy at once or she could not long survive. I heard an old Quaker gentleman tell the story afterwards how he ran with great haste to the nearest drug store to get the brandy thinking the statement of the physician must be true, but on arriving with it the matron took care that the poor girl got but the one spoonful administered by the physician. "For as soon as the Dr. had placed the bottle out of his hand the matron conveyed it to mine with a significance that gave me to understand that I had leave to put it in my pocket and to take it away. She then went on with her own way of treating the case which was the administration of strong beef tea and strong coffee, and the testimony of the patient was that she never felt as well before when recovering from a fit of tremens as she did at that time."

Poor girl! Thankful as she was from the depths of her soul for the kindness of the ladies and the shelter of the Home, yet appetite again asserted its power and again she yielded to the might of the destroyer, and a year later a letter of inquiry came from the matron of a reformatory house that had been opened in Kansas City, Mo., saying, "Do you know Eva Lloyd? She is here and she speaks of you, Mother Benedict, and the matron of the Home in the warmest terms of praise. Poor girl! she has sowed the wind and is reaping the whirlwind. She is dying of consumption, but I hope and believe that, being truly penitent, she is a saved girl."

Digitized by Google

I have told you the story of the old Quaker gentlemen responding to the Dr.'s order for brandy, now I will tell you of the effect upon Hattie and Nellie, into whose presence it was brought, as I learned it from their own lips.

"Although our distress at poor Eva's condition almost blinded our eyes with tears as we ministered to her necessities, we were no sooner released from her bedside than we commenced our search for the brandy that had been brought in sight and smelling distance of us and of which we thought, 'Are these people fools to bring this temptation before us?' We did not leave a spot unsearched from garret to cellar, and no doubt would have possessed ourselves of it had it not been for the care of the matron returning it to the old gentlemen who brought it, fearing lest it might be a temptation to us."

But a little time elapsed until there was revival services commenced in the little Quaker church by the state capitol. To this the kind Quaker gentleman and his wife proffered their escort to Hattie and Nellie the Board consenting. Nellie was soon converted, and the Board having reversed their order of allowing the girls to attend outside meetings, she found herself shut off from what she deemed now so great a privilege and she sought the counsel and protection of the servant of the Lord who came to her relief at the first. The dear good lady kindly took her in and from that hour treated her as her own daughter. Here she could have full privileges of the services of what proved to be a wonderful revival. During the meeting she made the acquaintance of a young gentleman who proffered himself as her escort during the remainder of the services. This offer was declined, on the ground that if he knew her history he would not wish to be her escort. Not easily turned aside, he begged to know what there was in her history that would debar him from such privilege. On being informed that she was a graduate of the Benedict Home he replied, "Notwithstanding that I will be your escort." This he continued to be, and continues still for

Digitized by Google

in August of the following year they were married and settled in our capitol city.

This narrative became of cash value when the bill for the first $5,000 given for the Home was pending in the house. One of the members preferring "Mother Benedict's" talk in a whisper to the oratory on the floor concerning the bill, came round and plied her with various questions and finally said, "Have you saved one?" To which I replied, "Not a mile from where we talk lives one that we took right off the evil road now honorably married and a consistent member of the church." To this the member replied, "If you have saved one, it is worth $5,000. I will vote for your bill." (This was man's estimate of the value of the salvation of one of these lost ones.) That vote was the salvation of the bill for one vote less and it would have been lost.

I blush to make the statement, but nevertheless it is true, that in this labor of love for the fallen I find it so much easier to win man's sympathy to the work than woman's. This leads me to feel that we well deserve the severe epithet, "Woman, woman's worst enemy." Yet I remember recoiling as it was presented by one of our legislators saying, "I wonder so much that women should be so hard on their own sex," to which I retorted, "The simple reason is our Adams are so weak we do not dare to have them around."

I have followed out the narrative of this poor girl the more carefully because of its testimony of the power of strong drink, even over womanhood, and also showing that even delirium tremens can be cured without administering so dangerous a remedy.

Fearing lest I have wearied the reader in following out this story and in dwelling so long on the story of Nellie, I will simply say of Hattie that notwithstanding her oft repeated yielding to the power of strong drink and through that to be again drawn back into dens of infamy, yet the seed sown in the Home brought forth fruit to the effect that the last time I saw her, she and her husband paid a visit to the Home both bearing the appearance of respectable life.

Digitized by Google

Yet I want to beg indulgence while I give the narrative of one more rescued during the first few months of the existence of the Home. Our first knowledge of her was the story of an editor into whose office she came one morning complaining of the treatment that she was receiving from the men of the village. She said she came there with a man to whom she thought she was legally married, but that he was selling her to the service of the lecherous. It was well for the poor girl that the editor had knowledge of the Home, although now in its infancy, and well too that there was a W. C. T. U. with some of the members of which he was well acquainted, for one was his wife. So taking the girl home with him he committed her to the care of the order which immediately made the necessary arrangements and sent the unfortunate to the Home. The matron and ladies of the Board soon discovered symptoms of insanity, and on the girl's stating that she was a minister's daughter they accepted that as one of the evidences that she certainly must be insane. However, as she gave the address of her father, they concluded to write, and they received in answer that it must be his missing daughter whom he had not considered strictly sane since she was twelve years old. In this deranged condition she had been lured from home and they had lost all trace of her. The Board succeeded in securing her admission to the insane hospital where reason was soon again restored. Here we lost account of her until aome years later as Sister Palmer was lecturing in Texas she noticed one woman in the audience whose expression indicated the most intense interest in the subject she was presenting and especially when she referred to the work of Iowa women among the fallen and the rescues through the benign influence of the Benedict Home.

At the close of her lecture the lady whom she had noticed as such an interested listener came to her giving a pressing invitation to dinner. In complying she found herself in a home of affluence presided over by a lady of Christian influence, who added this one more testimony to the blessings of the

Digitized by Google

Home to the unfortunate; as she called Sister Palmer aside to her room and told her the story of her suffering at the hand of evil men, and of her escape by the way of the stepping stones made possible to her through the benediction of the Home.

In the first few months of the existence of the Home there came another trial to the ladies of the Board which caused them to say, "Mother Benedict has provided for the living, but she has made no provision for the dead." For death had entered the Home and the question was "Where can we bury our dead?" They had dispatched to the friends of the girl as to what they should do with the remains and received the answer back, "Bury her there." Not deeming it prudent to draw on the Home treasury for the means to purchase a lot in the cemetery, they telegraphed the friends again, "Will you bear the expense?" The reply was a positive refusal. But a kind gentleman in the city said to the ladies encouragingly, "I am quite sure that if you bring this matter before the proper authorities, the city will give you a portion of the cemetery that you may have a place of your own where to inter your dead. He also kindly said, "I will open my vault and the remains of the young girl can be placed there until you are in possession of grounds that you can call your own."

The Board felt they received a great blessing by Sister Palmer's providentially coming to them in their time of need and in her able, tender way conducting the funeral exercises, after which the remains of the poor girl were as carefully deposited in the vault of the rich man, as though it had been one of his own family. But even this was not attended without expense. And just here I will tell you how this was met. When the word came to me in the field of what had transpired at the Home, and of the unwillingness of the friends to minister to the necessities of their own, I providentially had an appointment in their vicinity, and, as I entered the Sacred desk with my usual prayer, "Father bring to my rememberance the things best suited to this audience," the

Digitized by Google

subject of the kindly care and Christian burial of the young girl at the hands of strangers came so vividly before me that I was favored so to portray it as to cause the ladies of the Board a glad surprise of a check for $35.00 with the instruction "that it be used to defray the expense you have incurred in the burial of your dead." Later I learned that an uncle of the deceased was in the audience.

Another incident came to the Home that is worthy of note because of the principle it involved which in after years became a matter of difference between "Mother Benedict" and the Board. There came to the Home an application from a wealthy lady for a young girl who had been for some time in her service and had been brought into prospective motherhood by a young man also in their employ. When this sad state of things came to the lady she wisely advised and secured an immediate marriage although the young people were still in their teens. They had been engaged for some time and tenderly loved each other. Now came the question that is ever present, "Where could the young girl be cared for?" Although they could with propriety continue the young husband in their employ, it did not to them seem at all practicable to care for her in their mixed family. So they made an application to the Home, the young man agreeing to pay a reasonable compensation for her board and care. Thus at this early period of the existence of the Home was a patient admitted on the very terms that were so positively refused and condemned later on when it became a question between "Mother Benedict" and the Board, "Whether a girl whose morals had been good up to the one misstep should be required to sign the same agreement to stay for the same length of time that was deemed necessary for the reformation of those who were uncultured and with whom immorality had become a fixed habit."

In the care of this young wife the Board received a fresh baptism of sympathy for the objects of their care. For as they became acquainted with her they were so impressed with

Digitized by Google

her purity of life, and later on with that of her husband, as they came to make his acquaintance at the bedside of his dying wife, who, through the ignorance of the matron and Board in regard to the danger of the fever of which the former patient died, had contracted it. Although the best medical skill was obtained and the tenderest loving care extended to her, she went down to her death. This seemed a stern providence, but was in reality a rich blessing to the work, as in this case the ladies who, many of them, had taken hold of it with finger tips, now embraced it in their hearts.

"We were all mourners" said one of the Board, as she related to me the sad story. For this, as the history of most of the experiences in the Home, came to me through the matron and members of the Board, my time being so steadily occupied in the lecture field, and in individual solicitation, ever impelled with the strictest diligence by that fear, "You will get us into debt and trouble," which I knew existed in the minds of so many of the executive ladies. But that time never came, through the blessing of the ever sustaining presence of the Lord in the heart of the worker and the kind response from the local unions of the State, the work went forward. The Home was not only sustained, but soon there was a surplus in the treasury that warranted the purchase of the coveted seven eighths of an acre that would place the Institution in the middle of a two acre lot. I sought an interview with the owner and found his terms to be $700 for that and a large barn standing on the lot just beyond, not wishing to sell the one without the other. But on conferring with Sister Callanan the acting trustee, she did not deem it expedient to offer him over $500. But this offer the gentleman did not think worth responding to and no further steps were taken until I met him and his wife at our annual meeting the following September. He being a minister of our church and a benevolent man, I ventured again to approach him on the subject. I asked him if he would not take $600, saying, "Now do not look at me as though trying to jew down on the price for I

Digitized by Google

think the property richly worth the $700. Now look at me as a beggar just as I am and think a little. Canst thou not donate $100? After a moment's thought he replied, "I will give $50." At which his little wife looked up saying, "Now may I not give $50?" After thinking a little again he said, "Thou mayst give $25." "Oh," she replied, "He thinks I do not own as much of this property as he does." In a moment he was won over to the principle of equal rights and said, "Thou mayst give $50."

My end was accomplished. I could not well express the gratitude that I felt at this, for I thought the battle was won, I was so sure that I could persuade the trustee to pay the $600. This I found her very ready to do on receiving the intelligence that the property could be obtained for that. My next work, aside from the support of the Home, was to put an addition to it doubling its capacity, and extending over the old line and several feet into the new purchase.

Now came in good play one of my notes that had been made valuable by a stranger whom I chanced to meet on the railway train and to whom I ventured to present it telling him of the object for which I was soliciting. Although it was not yet due as $20,000 had not been pledged, yet, as he proved to be a lumberman in the city, I ventured to present the note and he kindly redeemed it by giving us the worth of the $100 pledged, in lumber. Mrs. Callanan assuming the responsibility set about the building in earnest, while I as earnestly struggled for the means to meet the bills that would be incurred. And the following winter found us very comfortably situated compared with the past.

But the time had now come when legislative work must be attended to that would again take me out of the field as solicitor. This weighed heavily, as Mrs. Callanan had advanced over $200 on the building so I was much in the same situation financially that I was when entering the legislature two years before. But in regard to my petitions for the change of code and the reformatory, I was ahead, having obtained permission

Digitized by Google

of the executive officers of the W. C. T. U. to put them in the field some time before our State convention. Many of the unions had made a canvass, obtained signatures and returned them even before annual meeting. I leave the reader to judge of my surprise and chagrin when the committee on plans of work reported that they had passed upon the petitions on this wise, "That they were indelicate for a woman to circulate and that the one for change of code be recalled," and the one asking for the reformatory fared but little better, its explanatory head being cut off and one put one so very modest that the lady who circulated it would have to stand and personally explain its purpose, necessarily using the same "objectionable" terms that were contained in the other.

At the moment of the reading of this report, I was so busily engaged in the removal of certain hinderances that came to the work through the order of the superintendent, that I let it pass without objecting, only taking time to think for a moment, "That is a pretty comment on me for I have been using these very terms both in public and private from city to city these years." And it was not until some time later when I met the printed recall of the petitions that I fully realized my situation and the damage that the work was likely to sustain from this order.

I had just dispatched an early breakfast at the home of Mrs. Dunham, where I always received the warmest hospitality, and was about to take the train for Ft. Madison, where arrangements had been made for a canvass of that city in the interest of the Home. As I took my seat on the train I must confess that my little being was almost or quite on fire as there appeared before my mental vision an arch fiend rubbing his hands and chuckling as he looked up into my face saying, "I will head you off now. I have got those women to work for me." I did not long have to endure this taunting of the enemy of all good for I had but barely settled myself in my boarding place that had been arranged for me when I learned that my host was an ex-senator. I immediately took my peti-

Digitized by Google

tions to him saying, "Brother, please read and criticise closely." It took him but a short time to come to this decision, "Your petitions are all right. They are just what you want. Take them and go ahead."

Acting on the counsel of the worthy senator, I stepped over the order of the convention and sent the original petitions everywhere that I had any hope of finding man or woman that would circulate them. I also threw them into the public press saying, "Any one wishing to do a good work could do it by cutting the petitions from the paper and attaching to a blank and circulating them." Just here we will give space to the petitions, leaving the reader to judge of their merit notwithstanding the criticism that was passed upon them by the State W. C. T. U.

1. "*To the Honorable—the Twentieth General Assembly of the State of Iowa:*

Believing that under the present statute, the punishment of the vice of prostitution is not commensurate with the offense, and that justice and reason demand *equal* punishment for *both* parties of the vice:

Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of the State of Iowa, do respectfully petition your Honorable Body to so amend section 4013 of the Code of Iowa, as to make the keeping of a house of ill-fame, a crime, punishable by imprisonment in the penitentiary for not less than three years, nor more than five, and also make prostitution a crime punishable by imprisonment in the penitentiary for not less than two nor more than three years, the punishment to be visited alike upon either sex."

2. "*To the Honorable—the Twentieth General Assembly of the State of Iowa:*

WHEREAS, in the work of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union among fallen women, we have found the class addicted to the use of strong drink, and degraded by vicious habits, not amenable to kindness, and

WHEREAS, our experience has emphasized the necessity of having a reformatory prison where such class can be placed under the restraint of the law; and

WHEREAS, there are now in our penal institutions no proper provisions for the care of women criminals, we, the members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and the citizens of the State of Iowa, do

Therefore, petition your Honorable body to enact laws necessary to the establishment of such a reformatory prison, and we do further petition

Digitized by Google

that said institution shall be officered by Christian women, and that all women criminals shall be incarcerated therein."

Thus I came up to the Legislature forearmed so far as the petitions were concerned, having nearly a bushel basket full of them and found them of the same intrinsic value that the Honorable Senator placed upon them. But now came another contest as judgment was passed upon me by a part, at least, of the executive committee for not acting according to the order of the State Convention. After having met the sternest reprimand, I quietly said, "Well I have had my whipping and do not feel so very bad after all." At this the fire was kindled again. Some of the hard things that were said I will not repeat. I will, however, state what I received from the editor of our State organ: "The Benedict Home would have come into existence and run on just as well without you." I had my own opinion about that and turned my thought on the work before me saying, "I cannot spend further time here for I want to see Senator Smith of this city before the Legislature opens, so must go at once." At which it was suggested that Mrs. Aldrich, being president of the State Union, ought surely to accompany me, which she positively refused to do at first as her anger had not yet cooled. But being urged to reconsider, she consented not only to call on the Honorable Senator, but it was also thought best that we should call on some parties who had recently been in attendance on a meeting held in the interest of reformatory work. By the time we had made the round and reached the Senator's office, we had imbibed enough of old Boreas to cool down the fire of anger or any other fire. So we stood before the honorable gentleman as sisters without any trace of the difference of sentiment that had so disturbed us but a short time before. And as I explained to the Senator the necessity of more stringent laws concerning prostitution, and also of a reformatory and prison where women criminals could be confined separate and apart from the prison where male convicts are incarcerated, Mrs. Aldrich looked up in one of her moods of glad surprise and

Digitized by Google

said, "See how she understands it? We do not always agree with Mother Benedict, but somehow afterwards we feel that we have been fighting against the Lord."

The next thing in order was the framing of the bills. For the care bestowed on this work I cannot express my gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Foster in too warm terms, especially the former in the framing of the bill for change of Code, as I so distinctly remember of how careful he put down in legal terms just the form of bill that would cover the ground that I so prayerfully desired. The bills as introduced were as follows:

SENATE FILE No. 56. BY MARSHALL.

A bill for an act to repeal Section 4013, Chapter 9, Title 24 of the Code, relating to houses of ill fame and to enact a substitute therefor.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa :

SECTION 1. That section 4013 of chapter 9, title 24 of the Code be and the same is hereby repealed and that there be and is hereby enacted in lieu thereof the following, to-wit:

SECTION 4013. If any person keep a house of ill fame resorted to for the purpose of prostitution or lewdness he or she shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by imprisonment in the penitentiary not less than three nor more than five years; and any person who, for purpose of prostitution or lewdness, resorts to, uses, occupies or inhabits any house of ill fame or place kept for the purpose aforesaid; and any person found at any hotel, boarding house or other place leading a life of prostitution and lewdness or who shall, by any artifice or inducement, endeavor to entice any other person into a life of shame or prostitution or endeavor to entice back into a life of shame any person who has been heretofore guilty of the crime of prostitution shall be deemed guilty of the crime of prostitution and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by imprisonment in the penitentiary not less than two nor more than three years, and it shall be presumptive evidence of guilt under the provisions of this section if a person be found in any house or place kept or used for purposes of prostitution or lewdness.

Digitized by Google

SENATE FILE NO. 79. BY SMITH.

A bill for an act to establish an institution for females to be known as the Iowa Industrial School and Reformatory and Prison for Females.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

NAME.

SECTION 1. That there shall be and is hereby established at Mitchellville, Polk county, Iowa, an institution for females to be known as the Iowa Industrial School and Reformatory and Prison for Females, said institution to be officered by women as hereinafter provided.

OBJECT.

SEC. 2. Said institution shall be for the safe custody and reformation of such girls as have been heretofore committed to the girls' department of the Iowa reform school and for such females as may be hereafter sentenced to imprisonment for criminal offenses for which such females might be sentenced to imprisonment in the penitentiary were the institution by this act created not established; and the imprisonment, safe custody and reformation of such females as have been sentenced to the penitentiary and are now imprisoned therein.

TRUSTEES—1634.

SEC. 3. There shall be a board of trustees whose name and style shall be, "The Board of Trustees of the Iowa Industrial School and Reformatory and Prison for Females;" and it shall consist of five persons who shall be appointed by the governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, no two of whom shall be taken from the same congressional district, and who shall hold office for the term of six years each, and until their successors are appointed and qualified.

All vacancies in said Board shall be filled by appointment by the governor of the State. No member of the General Assembly shall be hereafter chosen as trustee of this institution.

1645.

SEC. 4. Said Trustees shall, before entering upon the discharge of their duties, take and subscribe an oath or affirmation to support the constitution of the United States and of this State and faithfully discharge the duties required of them.

COMPENSATION, 1646.

SEC. 5. The members of said Board shall receive no compensation except the same mileage going to and returning from the place of meeting as members of the General Assembly, computed for the actual distance from their residence to the place of meeting.

Digitized by Google

OFFICERS CHOSEN, 1647.

SEC. 6. Said Board of Trustees shall from the Board appoint a President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and shall take charge of the general interests of the institution; shall have power to enact by-laws and rules for the regulation of all its concerns not inconsistent with the constitution and laws of this State; to see that its affairs are conducted in accordance with the requirements of law and that strict discipline maintained therein; to provide employment and instruction for the inmates; to appoint a Superintendent, a Steward, a Teacher or Teachers and such other officers as in their judgment the wants of the institution may require and prescribe their duties; to exercise a vigilant supervision over the institution, its officers and inmates; to remove such officers at their pleasure and appoint others in their stead and determine the salaries to be paid to the officers; and shall also require the Treasurer to execute a bond to the State of Iowa in a sufficient amount to be approved by the executive council and filed in the office of the Secretary of State.

1648

SEC. 7. They shall cause the inmates under their charge to be instructed in piety and morality, and in such branches of useful knowledge as are adapted to their age and capacity; in some regular course of labor, either mechanical, manufacturing, or agricultural as is best suited to their age, strength, disposition and capacity and as may seem best adapted to secure their reformation and future welfare.

SCHOOLS VISITED, 1650.

SEC. 8. One or more of the Trustees shall visit the institution once in every month and inspect all its departments. A record of these visits shall be kept in the books of the Superintendent. Once in each year, or oftener, if the Trustees think it necessary, they shall examine the accounts of the Superintendent and prepare a report on the condition of the institution on the first Monday in November next preceding the meeting of the General Assembly, which, together with a full report of the Superintendent and a list of the officers and their salaries with an estimate of the value of the personal property of the State in connection with the institution shall be laid before the General Assembly.

SUPERINTENDENT, 1651.

SEC. 9. The Superintendent with such subordinate officers as the Trustees may appoint, shall have the charge and custody of the inmates; she shall discipline, govern, instruct, employ and use her best endeavors to reform the inmates in such manner as while preserving their health, will secure the promotion as far as possible of moral, religious and indus-

Digitized by Google

trious habits and regular, thorough progress and improvement in their studies, trade and employment.

BOND, 1652.

SEC. 10. She shall, before entering upon her duties give a bond to the State with sureties, the amount and sureties to be satisfactory to the Board of Trustees, conditioned, that she shall faithfully perform all her duties and account for all money received by her as Superintendent, which bond shall be filed in the office of the Secretary of State; she shall have charge of all the property of the institution within the precincts thereof; she shall keep in suitable books, complete accounts of all her receipts and expenditures and of all property intrusted to her, showing the income and expenses of the institution and in such manner as the Trustees may require for all money received by her. Her books and documents relating to the institution shall at all times be open to the inspection of the Trustees. She shall keep a register containing the name, age and circumstances connected with the early history of each inmate and shall add such facts as shall come to her knowledge relating to her history while at the institution and after leaving it.

CONVICTED OF CRIME, 1653.

SEC. 11. When any girl under the age of sixteen years shall in any court of record be found guilty of any crime excepting murder, the said court may, if in its opinion the acused is a proper subject therefor, instead of entering judgment, cause an order to be entered that said girl be sent to the Industrial School department of this institution, pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, and a copy of said order duly certified by the clerk under the seal of said court shall be a sufficient warrant for conveying said girl to the said Industrial School and for her commitment to the custody of the Superintendent thereof.

CONVICTED IN JUSTICE COURT, 1654.

SEC. 12. When a girl under the age of sixteen shall be convicted before a justice of the peace, or other inferior court, of any crime, or of being a disorderly person, it shall be lawful for the magistrate before whom she may be convicted to forthwith send such girl, together with all the papers filed in his office on the subject, under the control of some officer to a judge of a court of record who shall then issue an order to the parent or guardian of said girl or such person as may have her in charge or with whom she last resided or one known to be nearly related to her, or if she be alone and friendless, then to such person as said judge may appoint to act as guardian for the purposes of the case, requiring her to appear at a time and place stated in said order to

Digitized by Google

show cause why said girl should not be committed to the Industrial School for reformation and instruction. But no girl shall ever be committed to the Industiral School in any case who is under the age of seven years or who is not of sound mind.

ORDER, 1655.

SEC. 13. Said order shall be served by the sheriff or other officer by delivering a copy thereof personally, to the party to whom it is addressed or leaving it with some person of full age at the place of resdience or business of said party and immediate return shall be made to the said judge of the time and manner of such service. The fees of the sheriff or other officer under the chapter shall be the same as now allowed by law for like services.

HEARING, 1656.

SEC. 14. At the time and place mentioned in said order or at the time and place to which it may be adjourned if the parent or guardian to whom said order may be addressed shall appear, then in his or her presence or if he or she fail to appear, then in the presence of some suitable person whom the judge shall appoint as guardian for the purposes of the case, it shall and may be lawful for the said judge to proceed to take the voluntary examination of said girl and to hear the case as may be produced, and if upon such examination and hearing the said judge shall be satisfied that the girl is a fit subject for the Industrial School he may commit her to said school by warrant.

WARRANT, 1657.

SEC. 15. The judge shall certifiy in the warrant the place in which the girl resided at the time of her arrest, also her age as near as can be ascertained and command the said officer to take the said girl and deliver her without delay to the superintendent of said school or other person in charge thereof at the place where the same is established; and such certificate for the purpose of this chapter shall be conclusive evidence of her residence or age. Accompanying this warrant the judge shall transmit to the superintendent by the officer executing it a statement of the nature of the complaint together with such other particulars concerning the girl as the judge is able to ascertain.

APPEAL, 1658.

SEC. 16. If the judge is of the opinion that the girl is not a fit subject for the school, or if said girl shall appeal from the decision of the court in which the conviction was had, he shall remand her to the custody of the officer who had her in charge to be returned to the magistrate before whom the conviction was had to be dealt with according to law.

Digitized by Google

COMPLAINT BY PARENT, 1659.

SEC. 17. If any parent or guardian shall make a complaint to a judge of a court of record that any girl, the child or ward of such parent or guardian, is habitually vagrant or disorderly or incorrigible, it shall and may be lawful for said judge to issue a warrant to have the sheriff or constable to cause said girl to be brought before him at such time and place as he may appoint, when and where said judge shall examine the parties, and if in his judgment the girl is a fit subject for the Industrial School he may issue an order, with the consent of said parent or guardian endorsed thereon, to be executed by a sheriff or constable, committing such girl to the custody of the Superintendent of said school for reformation and instruction till she shall attain the age of twenty-one years; provided, that security for the payment of the expenses of said complaint, commitment and of conveying said girl to the Industrial School and the expenses of board at such school may in the discretion of said judge be required of said parent or guardian.

DISCHARGE, 1660.

SEC. 18. No girl shall be committed to said Industrial School for a longer term than until she attain the age of twenty-one years, but the said Trustees by their order may, at any time after one year's service, discharge a girl from said school as a reward of good conduct in the school and upon satisfactory evidence of reformation.

SEC. 19. Any girl committed to the Industrial School shall be there kept, diciplined, instructed, employed and governed under the direction of the Trustees until she arrives at the age of twenty-one years, is reformed or legally discharged.

1661.

The discharge of a girl as reformed or having arrived at the age of twenty-one years shall be a complete release from all penalties incurred, by conviction of the offense for which she was committed.

TRANSFERRED TO REFORMATORY, 1662.

SEC. 20. Any girl committed to the Industrial School Department who shall prove unmanagable, or whose presence shall be detrimental to the said school, may be transferred to the Reformatory Department of this institution until she shall give such evidence of reformation as in the judgment of the said Board and Superintendent shall render her a fit subject for the said school.

And any female under the age of twenty-one years who shall be committed to the Reformatory Department may if she so desires, upon good behavior and upon the judgment of the Trustees and Superintendent, be transferred

Digitized by Google

to the Industrial School Department and be subject to all laws, rules and regulations governing such department.

Transfered to Prison.

Sec. 21. If any female sentenced by any court of record to the Reformatory department of this Institution, shall prove unruly or incorrigible or if her presence shall be manifestly and persistently dangerous to the welfare of the Reformatory, the Trustees and Superintendent shall have power to remove her to the prison department of this institution until the expiration of the term for which she was committed, or until such time as she shall have shown by good behavior that she may safely be returned to the Reformatory.

Aiding to Escape, 1663.

Sec. 22. Every person who unlawfully aids or assists any girl lawfully committed to this institution in escaping or attempting to escape therefrom or knowingly conceals such girl after her escape, shall be punished by fine not exceeding one thousand dollars and imprisonment in the penitenitary not exceeding five years.

Appropriation for Building.

Sec. 23. That for the purpose of erecting the necessary buildings and carrying out the provisions of this act, there be and is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars to be paid by the Treasurer of State upon warrants drawn by the State Auditor issued as directed by the Executive Council in payment of claims audited and allowed by them.

Building.

Sec. 24. It shall be the duty of the Executive Council as soon as practicable after the taking affect of this act, to cause to be erected upon the grounds belonging to the State at Mitchellville, but separate and apart from the building occupied as the girls' department of the Iowa Reform School, a suitable building or buildings with the necessary and proper prison and reformatory accommodations for said institution and for that purpose after adopting the best practicable plan and specifications for such building or buildings, shall advertise for bids and let the erection of said building or buildings to the lowest responsible bidder or bidders and shall see that the same is erected according to the plan and specifications adopted, and they may for that purpose employ a competent architect to superintend the erection thereof and they shall audit and allow claims presented to them for work faithfully done and material furnished according to contract entered into for the construction of said building

Digitized by Google

or buildings and direct the Auditor of State to issue warrants therefor; *provided*, however, that the entire cost of the construction and completion of said building or buildings shall not exceed the sum by this act appropriated. And any contract or agreement calling for a greater expenditure or entailing upon the State a greater liability than the sum herein appropriated, shall be absolutely null and void.

Unlawful to Send.

Sec. 25. As soon as said institution is ready for the reception of inmates the Governor shall cause the judges of the several district courts of the State to be notified thereof, and thereafter it shall be unlawful for any court to sentence any female convict to the State prison either at Fort Madison or Anamosa, but thereafter every female convicted of any criminal offense for which she might be sentenced to the penitentiary if the institution created by this act were not established, shall be sentenced to imprisonment in said Reformatory and Prison at Mitchellville for the same time for which such female convict might be sentenced to the penitentiary were it not for the institution created by this act.

Removal of Convicts.

Sec. 26. The Governor shall also, upon the completion of said building or buildings and as soon as the institution is ready for the reception of inmates, cause to be removed thereto from the penitentiaries at Fort Madison and Anamosa, all female convicts therein confined, and it shall be the duty of the wardens of said penitentiaries respectively upon the order of the Governor therefor to convey and transfer to said institution at Mitchellville all female convicts who may then be confined in said penitentiary and deliver them to the Superintendent of said institution with a certified statement setting forth the name of each convict and showing when, where, by what court, for what crime and for what term of imprisonment she was sentenced, which statement duly signed by the warden, shall be sufficient authority for the confinement of such convict in said institution for the remaining portion of the term for which she was sentenced.

Change of Name.

Sec. 27. The girls' department of the Reform School, situated at Mitchellville, be and hereby is placed under the management and control of the Board of Trustees and Superintendent of the institution created by this act, and shall be known as the Iowa Industrial School.

Appropriation for Support.

Sec. 28. There is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State treasury not otherwise appropriated the sum of ten dollars per

Digitized by Google

month, or so much thereof as may be necessary, for each inmate actually supported in the institution by this act created, counting the average number sustained in the institution for the month; and upon the presentation to the Auditor of State each month of a sworn statement by the Superintendent of the average number of inmates supported by the institution for the preceding month, the Auditor of State shall draw his warrant on the Treasurer of State in favor of the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of this institution for the sum hereinbefore provided.

CHAPTER 176.

APPROPRIATION FOR BENEDICT HOME. S. F. 288.

An ACT for an Appropriation for the Benedict Home.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

SECTION 1. There is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of five thousand dollars to be expended in the judgment of the Executive Council for the enlargement and support of a refuge for fallen women of Iowa, known as the Benedict Home, and situated just north of the city limits of Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa.

Approved April 7, 1884.

Unfortunately for our bill for the reformatory, it necessarily had to touch the interest of our then Reform School, changing its name to "Industrial," which it now is. This would unharness all the faculty; trustees, members of the board, superintendent and teachers would all necessarily have to be reappointed, or be displaced. This together with the plea that it would stigmatize the school to allow the reformatory and prison combined to occupy any part of the eighty acres of ground which the State then owned in connection with the school; and, added to this, the warden of the penitentiary at Anamosa joined in the fight against us, having an ambition that the women criminals should be retained in the common penitentiary. I remember well his expression, when he first understood what we were aiming to do, which was: "I will fight you."

I had arrested the attention of Mr. Martin, then warden of Anamosa penitentiary, by telling the story of a woman, an ex-convict, with whom I providentially came in contact. As

Digitized by Google

two ladies of one of our river cities were piloting me, by a sort of cross-lots, nearer way, to one of the abodes of vice in the suburbs of their city, we found ourselves, after climbing a long hill, on a sort of camel's back with the descent on the opposite side too steep to attempt. So, looking along the ridge for some possible way out of our difficulty, we discovered a little house built on the side of the bluff and made our way to it, thinking by that means to be directed to some way down. We found very convenient steps down to a platform in front of the dwelling. The ladies stepped down before me and rapped at the door and as their rap was responded to, they instinctively shrank back and cast such terrified glances at me as caused me to wonder, as I saw nothing terrifying in the woman who stood before them. As they hastened from her presence I was just stepping down on the platform in front of her door, when she accosted me with, "I do not want to have any arrests here." "Arrests!" I said, "dear woman, what do you mean?" To which she replied, "You know how everybody regards me." "Regards you, dear woman, how should I know, I never saw or heard of you till just now?" "Well," she replied, "I have seen you before." "Do you not remember the woman you met in Anamosa prison last April, whose time expired in May?" "Oh, yes, I answered, I do remember; are you the woman? Let me shake hands with you," extending my hand which she warmly grasped, as I went on saying, "And is this your home in this secluded spot? Well, after all, there is a blessing in seclusion; alone with God is in itself of so great value." But while I lingered to talk, the dear sisters had passed quite a little down the hill and stood watching us with expressions of deep anxiety, and as I joined them, after a very friendly leave-taking of the, to them, so dangerous a woman, they exclaimed: "Not for a hundred dollars would we have rapped at that door had we known who lived there. We never thought of speaking to her before. The children on the street mock at her, she throwing stones at them. But after watching the interview that you have just had we have

Digitized by Google

come to the conclusion that the next time we meet her we will speak to her." I had related this as evidence of the condition in which a woman leaves a penitentiary where men are incarcerated, and the way she is received in the outside world when her time of sentence expires. Mr. Martin made good his word, for he did fight me, or rather the bill, having this advantage in his favor. Our bill, together with the petitions asking for it, having to go into the hands of the committee on penitentiaries, the chairman of which came from Anamosa district; and met us with the plea that if he favored that bill or in any way put it forward he would be going against his constituents. Deterred by this he so held the bill back that the suggestions to my mind were that it would never even get a hearing, which suggestions the sequel proved a reality. Having come to this conclusion, I saw the necessity of enlarging the capacity of the Home beyond what it seemed to me possible that I could gain the means to accomplish by ever so great diligence in lecturing and soliciting from the charitable of the State. So I turned my thoughts prayerfully on the subject-matter of a bill, asking of the legislature $5,000 to be used for this purpose. And I was so blessed of the Lord in the framing of it that it passed both houses without a word of change. The Lord be praised who so supplied the lack of the little uneducated woman. It was kindly presented to the senate by, I think, as I remember now, the Hon. Sutton, of Marshall county. The bill for change of code being presented by Hon. Marshall, whose location I cannot give as he was also the Rev. Marshall, whose acquaintance I first made when stationed at Burr Oak, Winnesheik county, but who had worthily filled the ministerial position in several other places in the State. My previous acquaintance with the reverend gentleman gave me great confidence in him as an able supporter of the bill. I soon found in the Rev. Green, a member of the house, a most indefatigable laborer in the interests of the bill for change of code. And to his faithful labors, backed up by the petitions which were daily being pre-

Digitized by Google

sented, I attribute its grand success in the house, its triumph there being far greater than in the senate. This help left me almost exclusively to bestow my labor as a lobbyist on the senate. This was very opportune as the needed work there consumed nearly all my strength; for during the whole session the physical was very weak, being so heavily drawn upon by the strain the mental was enduring.

My work having become more popular with the prominent ladies of the W. C. T. U. than it was in the Nineteenth General Assembly, they came quite frequently to my aid and support which was a joy to my heart. For the presence of one woman, willing to bear with me the reproach of the unfortunate for whom I labored, standing beside me in the presence of our law-making power, was of inexpressible value. I will never forget the comfort their presence gave me on the occasion of going before the judiciary committee, to which the bill for change of code was necessarily entrusted.

I was standing about midway of the senate chamber when word came to me that Sister Maxfield, our then State secretary, and two other ladies with her, had inquired of the honorable committee when we might make the pleading in support of the bill, and had received the answer back, "right now." So, without any preparation save that of looking up to my Father in heaven with this earnest appeal: "Oh, my Father, give me strength of body to stand before those men, and bring to my remembrance just the things I ought to say."

Thus, relying solely on the Lord, I entered the committee room. The sisters accompanying me taking their seats behind me while I stood and made my pleading. I cannot call to mind now, nor ever have been able to since, one word that I said, but it was passed upon by Senator Sweeney, whom I considered the ablest and most clear cut speaker of the Senate, as he reported it, "Mother Benedict was the smartest woman that attended that Legislature." On hearing this I simply thought that the Senator had not duly considered the charge of the Lord Jesus to his followers when they should

Digitized by Google

be brought before the authorities for his name's sake, "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

Our bill was soon reported back to the Senate, or rather a substitute, it having been so amended by the judiciary as to make this form of return necessary. We gladly accepted the substitute for it so amended the bill as to render it more likely to pass without taking anything from its intrinsic value. The committee also added its favorable recommendation, "that it do pass." Thus relieved of present anxiety in regard to this bill, I turned my attention with all my energies to the bill asking for an appropriation for the Home. The time set by the appropriation committee was very inopportune as there were but very few of the members present, and one of them so unfavorable to the bill that he brought from the State Library a book one hundred years old, save one, in which it was stated that among the peasantry of Russia and France the death rate was greater where invalids were brought together in institutions than among the peasantry at large. He reasoned from this that it was not a good thing to have a refuge to which unfortunate womanhood could flee for Christian shelter. It is due to the chairman of the committee, Senator Sutton, of Marshalltown, to say that he did the best he could for the bill, but his opponent prevailed and it was sent back to the Senate "indefinitely postponed." At this I almost sprang to my feet, but in a moment remembered that I was not a Senator with a right to speak, but a woman with only the right to plead, and began to cast about to see what was the next thing to do, and soon settled in the determination to get the bill recalled and again in the hands of the committee. The session that day was in reality a very long one, but to me, in my suspense, doubly so, for it did not close until after their usual supper time, and as we were passing out of the Senate chamber Mrs. Woods, a W. C. T. U. sister, in conversation with a Senator just before me said, "We want that bill recalled. We want to make another pleading

Digitized by Google

for it. But this is no time to talk to you for you are tired and hungry."

Unlike the man who could not aid in the rescue of the drowning man because he had never been introduced to him, I stepped forward saying, "I want him to be tired. I want him to be hungry. I want him to be sick and very sick, and then I will make a pleading for the provision of shelter for these poor unfortunates." I got a quick response, "You shall have another hearing." I had struck the fountain of benefit to every enterprise that had for its object the uplifting and ennobling of manhood and womanhood, our honorable and worthy Senator Clark, who true to his promise, soon had the bill back in the hands of the committee, when it was again considered. He was present at this meeting and aided by Mrs. Woods so plead its merits that it was returned to the Senate recommended, "That it do pass." Taking a little rest of thought in reference to this bill, I turned to the interest of the one for change of Code. Although I was rejoiced by the favor it received before the judiciary, I had felt uneasy that it was now in manuscript as the substitute returned by the committee had not been printed and laid on every table, so ventured to suggest to Honorable Marshall, who presented it at the first, "that it ought to be printed," to which he replied that he "thought it perfectly safe as it was." And I, being only a lobbyist and a woman to boot, dared make no farther suggestion, so daily watched the calendar looking prayerfully to the hour when it would be reached. That, to me so very important, moment came. The reading of the bill was called for, but oh, such a reading. I was puzzled to know whether the clerk of the Senate, like our W. C. T. U. sisters, was shocked at the expressions it necessarily contained or whether the manuscript, being in the penmanship of a lawyer was therefore nearly illegible. Or be it for a cause best known to himself, the reading was such as made it unintelligent to the Senators, and inquiries began to pour in as to its meaning. At this the Senator, who presented the bill, felt indignant

Digitized by Google

and sprang to his feet with, I am not sure whether with a motion or a recommendation, but to the effect that it be returned to the judiciary. Right here came the benefit of a little work that I had done as lobbyist a few days before. There was one Senator, the Hon. Bills, of Davenport, who, above all others, I had feared to approach, beside he was such a busy man that I had failed so far to see him at leisure until on this occasion my eye fell upon him standing by a window entirely away from his seat when the word seemed to come to me, "Go and speak to Bills." Then came the flinching thought, "Dare I, dare I approach Bills?" This was answered with, "Nothing ventured, nothing had." So as meekly as I knew how, I approached the Senator asking him if he was at leisure to which he replied in the affirmative. I then asked him if I might speak to him in reference to a bill in which I was deeply interested. He kindly told me I might. Then I presented the necessity of more stringent laws in regard to prostitution, and plead for a moment the merits of the bill, there pending, on the subject. To this his reply was, "I want it so that it will catch them in hotel, boarding house, or wherever they are." I replied, "I think our bill covers the ground. Thus the Senator's mind was refreshed on the subject and, with his quick perception, he saw the danger that would come to the bill if the Senator's motion were carried that it be returned to the judiciary. I saw as quick as he did that it would go to the bottom of the calendar and would never be reached. But, although I almost sprang to my feet at the suggestion, I was powerless to say a word in its defense. Not so with Senator Bills. He had the power and he instantly used it. Ere there had been time for a second to Marshall's motion, if it were a motion, he was on the floor with, "I move that this bill be made a special order for to-morrow, and that it be printed and laid on every table."

If ever in my life I drew a sigh of releif, it was just then. And the man of whom we women were all afraid, for we

Digitized by Google

thought he was against everything we wanted, was just then and there the means of saving the bill.

From the time I began to agitate the subject and plead the necessity of such law, the foregone conclusion of saints and sinners had been, "You never can attain it. Men will never give you such a law." But hitherto I had the encouragment of its having been very favorably considered, and, now, tomorrow was set for the trying moment. The remainder of that day was to me a day of prayer. I remember asking the prayers of the church that evening, telling them that I saw myself as a traveler standing on the margin of a turbid stream beyond which lay the good that he had been seeking for years. But so helpless his condition that he had neither boatman, boat nor oars, to cross him over, his only resort being prayer.

The next morning found me in my seat as usual watching the business of the Senate with a deep interest of just when they would take up the bill. The time finally came and its merits and demerits were discussed and finally passed upon with a favorable majority. This put me at rest concerning this bill so far as the Senate was concerned. But I still continued to pass my petitions into the House, leaving the work of lobbying to the hands of its able supporter, the Hon. Green, who had so warmly espoused its cause at the first.

I continued prayerfully to watch the fate in the Senate of the bill asking for an appropriation for the Home, the hearing of which was delayed so long that I oft had occasion to remember the declaration, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

When at last the time seemed very near at hand, I was informed, as the Senate rose at noon, that it would take all the afternoon to locate the hospital for the insane that was then pending. Hence I would not necessarily have to attend the afternoon session. So having work to do that I felt that I could not longer delay, I thought this an opportune time. But I had been employed, but a short time until the voice that had been guiding me all along said, "Go to the Senate

Digitized by Google

quick." I dropped my work and donned my wraps in the shortest time possible, and on entering found that the bill had been read and the discussion already commenced.

Thus was I confirmed again that it was the voice of the Lord that had been and was still guiding me. For without my presence I had not the shadow of a doubt but that the bill would have been lost. The ruling of the president of the Senate, treating the bill as a private enterprise, it necessarily required a two-thirds majority to carry it.

This I felt sure it was impossible to attain without the vote of one party at least whose vote, if cast at all, would be in answer to my persistent appeals that in the cause of mercy he would favor the bill.

While on my tongue there was enjoined the strictest silence, still my eyes could speak and their language was repeatedly read as the glance of the Senator met mine.

Senator Clark's speech, made on this occasion, was accorded by all who heard it, to be the ablest and grandest speech made during that term of the legislature. But, still, when the ayes and nays were called for, we lacked two of the needed majority.

The Senator, to whom I have alluded having failed to vote until he could bear the silent appeals of the little woman no longer, he not only rose and cast a vote in favor, but persuaded another member, who had also declined voting to cast his vote in favor of it.

Thus was established so far as the Senate was concerned, the custom that has been followed by each succeeding legislature, of making an appropriation to aid the W. C. T. U. of Iowa in caring for unfortunate womanhood in the Benedict Home in Des Moines.

This may seem to the reader, but a small achievement, but to one who had been hoping, praying, working for years, life pledged without salary, it was too joyous a moment to pass unnoticed as Senators left their seats and came back to shake hands with me congratulating me on the passage of the bill.

Digitized by Google

The one, to whom I had so silently appealed when the bill was pending being the first one to come and offer his congratulations.

This hand shaking over I said, "I am done with the Senate. I will now turn my attention to the House," as now everything depended on the favorable passage of the bills there.

I had but barely stepped down into the rotunda when a member of the House met me, and extending his hand, congratulated me on the passage of my bill. "Oh," I replied, "but you may kill it in the House." "Why," he said, "the bill, to which I refer, has passed both houses." I made inquiry with bated breath, "Have you passed favorably upon the bill for change of Code?" He replied, "We have." I asked, "With what majority?" "Eighty voices for and two against."

I had no language to voice my joy, so stood still before the Lord in silent gratitude to Him who had continually whispered in my ear, "I am with thee and thou shalt succeed in the work to which I have sent thee."

I had all along been reaping the benefit of seed sown in the Nineteenth General Assembly. The member of the House who was chairman of the committee to which my petitions and bills were referred in the Nineteenth General Assembly was a Senator in the Twentieth, and, in the course of my lobbying, as I approached him with, "Senator, what about my work now?" he replied, "Mother Benedict, I am going to vote for just what you ask. You have made this subject a study, I have not."

From this sowing came now my reaping in the House, as I had made the large hearted and able Representative Wolfe, of Cedar county, a convert to the work in the Nineteenth General Assembly, now, in the Twentieth, he was Speaker of the House and I was in doubt as to what he could do for me now that he was Speaker. Until I learned that he was elected Speaker I had all along depended on him for a grand speech in defense of the bill. So when I met him I inquired,

Digitized by Google

"Speaker Wolfe, what now? I had depended upon you as the man to defend my bill for the appropriation. Would it be possible for you to put any one else in the chair, and do it now that you are Speaker?" He said, "It would be possible, but I would prefer to have it defended by some one else," but added, "I will do all I can to help you."

This assurance was a great comfort to me for I knew that it would exhaust all our efforts in its support. My fears were verified as it was passed upon unfavorably by the sifting committee.

I want to speak in praise of Florence Miller, Mrs. Woods and others who lent their influence in getting it fished out of the waste basket and again before the committee. And especially right here I will speak in praise of Mrs. Miller as she stood by me until near midnight when almost every other woman had left and we stood waiting the adjourning of the House, having had the promise that the committee would meet immediately at the close of the session. As it was now near midnight, the members did not take time to go the committee room, but assembled in the main aisle. As we stood waiting the moment when our plea for the bill might be heard, Speaker Wolfe coming down the aisle ran his eye over our little assembly, quickly divined what was before us and remarked, "I shall rule that it does not take a two-thirds majority to carry that bill. It is not a private enterprise. It is for the benefit of the whole State, therefore my ruling will be that a majority will carry the bill." "That is the right ruling," said Ex-Governor Carpenter, who happened to be standing near by, and in his deep interest in the work he turned to Major Tuttle, the chairman of the committee, saying, "You have members enough already present to pass upon the question. Why not put the motion right now? The chairman acted on his suggestion, the motion was put, all present recommending, "That it do pass."

One honorable gentleman, however, coming upon us at the moment growled out, "You may put me down for a minority

Digitized by Google

report." At this I inquired, "Is he a member of the committee?" "No," was the reply, "he is an outsider." This was said for my comfort, I presume, though not strictly in accordance with the truth, for his minority report was heard from when the bill was put upon its passage.

All this battle the Lord fought for us, while Florence and I stood by and held our peace, for, all occasion for our pleading for the bill was taken away in the short speech and enunciation of Speaker Wolfe.

It is due to Speaker Wolfe that I should thus speak in his praise, because of the unfavorable criticism that I passed upon him as I first met him in the House in the Nineteenth General Assembly. I then thought to myself, "What is that man doing here? What interest has he in the business of this Legislature?" as he sat there with his back to the Speaker, dallying with a little child, with an expression that seemed to me so very foreign to any interest in the work that he was elected to perform. The next day I heard him make a speech and I said, "That man has a head, I will feel for his heart." So, inquiring where he was stopping, I resolved to intrude upon the time that was really his own, and being admitted to his presence I was soon ready to take back all the unfavorable judgment that I had passed upon him, as I found him acting the part of both father and mother, having passed the terrible ordeal of laying the mother in her grave a few days before the opening of the Legislature. He had brought his whole family with him that they might be under his immediate care during the time that duty demanded his stay at the capitol. With such a man it took but a short presentation to enlist his sympathy, which seemed to have deepened in the intervening years, as he remarked to me in the Twentieth General Assembly, "I was converted to your work two years ago, and my opinion has not changed."

The grandest help of all that I received from the honorable Speaker came in the ruling when, near midnight, our bill was put upon its passage, a time that foreshadowed almost certain

Digitized by Google

disaster to any bill on which there would be any difference of opinion. As the hour was so very late, the discussion was short and the vote soon called for, which resulted in 48 for and 26 against, almost a two-thirds majority, but not enough to carry any bill, as it required a majority of all the members of the House. Speaker Wolfe announced the vote but still held his gavel. A rally was made by the friends of the bill and another member brought to his seat, when the Speaker announced 49 for it, but still holding his gavel looked appealingly in the faces of the honorable fathers, while I steadily looked to the Lord for a moment, and two rose and changed their vote, which gave us 51, whereupon he brought down his gavel with, "It is carried." He knew that there was a technical point of law involved, but he ran his chances and gave the bill the benefit of the doubt. My time for rejoicing over the victory, however, was very short, as a moment later there was a motion for reconsideration. "Oh," I thought, "they will kill it now sure." But ere there came a second there came a motion to, "Table the motion," which being seconded and voted upon was carried, and the bill was secure beyond any farther doubt. It was then the strain that had been upon my mental and physical being for months, and even years, was relaxed. That fear of, "I told you so," which I had such reason to expect would come to me, in case of failure, from the multitudes who had said, "You never can succeed," was past. The Lord be praised for the victory, for surely His hand was in it both in ordering the work and in carrying it forward.

While we had not succeeded in getting the compulsory reformatory, we had now the means at our disposal to enlarge the Benedict Home so that we could say to the poor prostitute when arrested, "If you will come to us and submit yourself to the reformatory regulations of the Home, there need be no further prosecution against you." Thus they were saved from the stern penalty of the law. This worked well in the thorough reformation of a majority of those thus sent to us.

Digitized by Google

But the prejudice of woman against her sister woman so prevailed over the loving spirit of Him who came to seek and save the lost, as to forshadow the time, not far distant, when the sin-sick prodigal daughter could no longer find shelter and pity in the Home which "Mother Benedict" had so nearly paid out her life to provide for her. That pride which rules over so many households as to bar the door against the erring daughter at her first misstep, and thus start her down to dens of infamy was fast getting possession of the management of the Home and closing the only door of hope by which she might return to the path of virtue and a future honorable life.

It is hard to enter thus upon the stern facts which so soon despoiled the Home of half its usefulness. It would not be so hard if it were not for the fact that those very women of whom I have to write seemed to be Christian women in every other respect save that which pertains to showing the Christ spirit toward erring womanhood.

I am aware that it may be very hard for the average reader to understand and appreciate the feelings of one separated from every other thought save that, "These are among the lost ones whom my Master came to save and I am his servant, and am only in the line of my duty as I lay my life out in the work of providing shelter for them and seeking them in the highways and hedges wherever they may be perishing, and bearing them in the arms of love to a place of refuge where they will be surrounded by the influences best calculated to make them understand the Saviour's love and to embrace Him as He comes to them, not only by His tender messengers, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, and thus created anew, their past sins be blotted out and remembered no more forever."

Dear reader, if thou canst not get down with me underneath the load of this class of sinners and so be able to see things from the same standpoint that I see them, then labor to separate between the individual characters with whom I have had to deal and the spirit of prejudice in woman's heart that has been all along this line of work the sternest monster that

Digitized by Google

I have had to fight, he alone being excepted who moved the heart of the first woman to sin. And keep in mind that it is this spirit of evil that, under my Master, I am laboring to exterminate from woman's heart and bring her to what seems to me the normal condition of a servant of Jesus of Nazareth, who showed himself just as ready to extend his loving pardon to womanhood as to manhood, and indeed if there is any difference the careful student of His life will find a balance of lenience in her favor. Failing to see this, the dear sisters failed largely to have the same amount of faith that He, in some way, would provide the means to carry on this work of benevolence for the lost ones of this class. For even after the Legislature had granted us $5,000 for the enlarging of the Home, the Executive Committee of the W. C. T. U., having it in their power, held back the work for a whole year, and it was not until "Mother Benedict" had well nigh plead her life out in the Executive Committee that an opportunity was given to take a vote on the question, "Shall we go forward and build according to the plan furnished by the acting Trustee?" Some parts of the pleading made there are still fresh in my memory. While those opposed plead the danger of our not having the means of support for as large a family as the proposed addition would accommodate, I remember replying, with the query, "Has there ever been hunger in the Home without food to satisfy it? Have any ever come to us destitute of clothing, but there was sufficient on hand to supply their needs. Now, sisters, inasmuch as, under the hand of our Father, the Home has come into existence, and all its wants have been met hitherto, ought we not to have as much faith concerning its future existence, as is implied in the answer of the noted infidel Ingersoll to the question of his belief concerning the life beyond, to which he replied, 'Having existence I think my chances are better to exist on, than they were to come into existence, whereas in the past I had no existence.'"

Digitized by Google

At the close of my speech, Sister Palmer rose and said, "While this discussion has been going on I have been in thought walking around Robt. Cullis' faith institution near Boston," and as she went on adding her plea of faith and reasoning from its actual fulfillment in the case of that trusting servant of the Lord in his institution, the spirit of objection seemed to die out, and when, as she closed, a vote was called for, everybody voted for the going forward with the building of the Home save one woman, who rose and said, "After all that I have heard on the subject of faith and its fulfillment I hardly dare, but, I vote 'no.'" This one more victory attained in the Executive Committee, and the acting Trustee was left at liberty to go forward with the building, which she did with her wonted praiseworthy zeal and perseverance.

This, in my opinion, might have been attained six months earlier had not the one little woman have been called from the State in attendance on her own dear daughter on the important occasion of the advent of her only grandchild. She thus was necessarily absent from the State convention in which the matter of the building of the Home should have been disposed of, and the acting Trustee left at liberty to go on with the work.

While I have been criticising, and shall have still further to criticise the Executive Committee and ladies of the Board more closely connected with the management of the Home, it is due to them that I should tell of some of the difficulties that confronted them in the management of some of the prodigal daughters that came to them for shelter. One extreme case I will mention that tried my soul as well as theirs. This is the case of a girl who was taken from jail in a most loathsome condition, both by filth and disease, and had had the kindest, most careful, and indulgent treatment at the hands of the Board, and especially by the matron for a period of more than a year, when to the chagrin of all interested in the work and in her, she persuaded two others who had been in the Home but a short time to go out with her, under

Digitized by Google

cover of darkness, and led them down by an old brewery, where, meeting some of her old associates in crime, they spent the night in their revelries of evil.

Notwithstanding their thus having broken the rules of the Home by going out and disgracing themselves and the Home, they were taken back on a second trial. Thus I found them as I came in weary from my work in the field. On receiving the intelligence from the matron as to what had happened and the labor that she had bestowed upon them, and the request that I would take them aside and talk to them, which I was only too willing to do, feeling that their conduct merited the sternest reproof. I reminded them of the disgrace they had brought upon themselves and upon me, the champion of their cause, upon the Home and upon every woman that had any interest in it, and that we had come to the conclusion to forgive them this time, but sternly admonished them that they had but to repeat this once more, and just as hard as I had worked to provide a Home for them, just so hard I would work to put them in the penitentiary. Two of them ever after comported themselves so well that in time they were honorably discharged from the Home, one so young, however, that she was sent to the Industrial School in which she would be a ward until she was twenty-one.

The first mentioned was still allowed to remain in the Home until she became almost a demon, at one time threatening the life of the matron, at another going to the attic clinching the telephone wires preventing the matron from communicating with the Board. And acts of insolence too numerous to mention were repeated until she was dismissed as incorrigible.

Although I was in the deepest sympathy with the Board and matron in what they had done for her and borne with her, yet I was not satisfied that she should be turned out, feeling that it was much safer for the community that she be turned into close confinement, even though we had to send her to the penitentiary, which under our new law we had the

Digitized by Google

power to do. While the Board of Managers felt that they had discharged their utmost duty toward her, my untiring zeal did not yield the case, but as I was contemplating the measures necessary for her incarceration the thought came to me, "Men are sent to the insane asylum on plea of moral insanity, why may not women have the same privilege under the same malady?" So I presented her case to the commissioners. Two lady physicians who had been in attendance at the Home stood by me in this lenient disposition toward the poor unfortunate. One gentleman physician who had been an attendant, however, differed from us, but another gentleman who had also been an attendant came to our aid, so interesting himself in the case as to visit the hospital for the insane at Mt. Pleasant and explain the whole matter to the management there, who so favorably entertained it as to say, "Bring on your patient, we will take charge of her." Thus the work was very easily accomplished.

After spending some months there, she came out so thoroughly changed that no trace of her former self could be recognized. And as the years passed on, she married and is now settled in one of our western states in a comfortable home living an honorable life. The other of adult age, who also came to us loaded with the disease that infests those haunts of vice, and over whom I had been very anxious lest she might return, I, for some years, had lost trace of, but recently what was my joyful surprise as I was about to step on the street car in our capital city I heard a voice calling, "Oh, Mrs. Benedict, let me shake hands with you." Lifting my eyes I saw her coming with ruddy face and extended hand. We had but a moment wherein to clasp hands, but to me it was one of inexpressible joy for she was evidently clothed "and in her right mind" and living an honorable life. Thus triumph crowned our efforts at the last, but the trial was a severe one to those who had it in charge who not having had the years of experience in the work or the baptism which stopped nothing short of "my life for your benefit."

Digitized by Google

Cotemporary with these girls in the Home was one whose acquaintance I first made in the jail at Marshalltown. Stopping off there and, as was my custom, going at once to the house of Sister Holmes, feeling sure that I was always a welcome guest there, I was informed by her that there was a sixteen year old girl in their jail, and that she was very anxious for me to go and see her. In obedience to her request I sought and found admission to the poor young girl's quarters in a cell with only a lattice door to protect her from the sight and sound of all the low filthiness that is common among male prisoners. After a season of conversation and prayer with the young unfortunate, I decided that was no place for her, so young, and never really having had a fair chance for virtuous life. Her mother, I learned, was a good woman, but her father, once a prosperous farmer, had passed all their living over the counter and into the till of the saloon keeper and they were left in the most squalid poverty. And not satisfied with thus beggaring his wife and children, his spirit had become so fiendish that it seemed to give him satisfaction to torture his poor wife still farther by placing her two little girls where every influence was calculated to lead them from the path of virtue. It was under these circumstances that the poor girl had been seduced, under promise of large money consideration which she stood so in need of for clothing, as nearly all her wages had to go to pay for her father's drinks. In her sad condition of prospective motherhood she was induced by a fiend in human form to take a situation which, in the eyes of the law, was mistress of a house of ill fame that he furnished for her with the consideration of being a sharer in its ill-gotten gains. Here justice soon overtook them and they were both arrested and thrown in jail where they were then waiting their trial under a charge that would result in the penitentiary if convicted. With this intelligence and a heart full of sympathy I hastened to communicate to dear Sister Holmes my plan as to what was our duty in the case, which was to see the county judge at once and beg him to

Digitized by Google

commit to us the keeping of the girl during the time which would intervene before her trial that she might receive hospital treatment. The dear sister espoused my thought with joy and ran as she was wont to do in like cases to call the assistance of her true yoke sister, Mrs. Woods, who heartily engaged in the work and sought the judge at once, and so presented the case as to secure the release of the girl and the deputizing of the matron of the Home as her keeper until the session of court before which she was to be tried. This gained the two sisters turned their attention to the furnishing of the needed changes of raiment for their young prisoner who was soon brought to us and committed to our care. All was working admirably until the thought struck me of a rule recently made by the Board that no girl who had contracted the fell disease that infests dens of infamy could be admitted to the Home. On inquiry I found that she was already its victim. I said to the ladies, "Then here is a bar to any farther action in the case," to which Mrs. Woods replied, "It is only in the incipient state, and she *shall* go to this Home. If you do not take her, I will, and you know that will be an additional expense as you are going down there and you can take her with you and thus save the money that you know we need so much in the various cases that come before us." As my real judgment ran in harmony with that of Mrs. Woods, I was easily persuaded to undertake the job and run my chances of smuggling the case or meeting the rebuke of the Board.

Now, this is a confession of some of the naughty things that I was guilty of while allowed at all, to have any figuring as to whom should enter the Home and under what circumstances they might come. I took my chances, afterwards making my confession and gaining a sort of reluctant pardon, and before night-fall the dear girl was safely sheltered in the Benedictine fold. But my anxieties over the rescue of this perishing one did not cease here. Unfortunately for the newcomer, one of those who had long shared the reformatory influences of the home and had become a great favorite with

Digitized by Google

the matron and had been indulged and petted by her, so abused the confidence that was placed in her as to secure a package of cigarettes at a grocery store where she had been sent on an errand, the fumes of which were soon discovered by the matron, who, finding by what means they had been brought into the house, not liking to bring down her judgment on her petted one, charged the newcomer with having persuaded her to the act in a manner that to me savored so of injustice that I confess I could hardly keep my seat in the adjoining apartment where I was in plain hearing of what was going on, but managed to make myself stay until a few moments later, the cry rang through the house, "Jennie has taken poison," which chanced to be at hand by prescription of her physician, but not at all designed to be taken in that way. This brought me quickly to the scene; meeting the petted and guilty party I could not help saying, "May, see what sin has cost," for which I was rebuked by the partial matron. Not heeding that, I hastened to join in the mixing of antidotes by which we were successful in the treatment of the unfortunate girl who in her desperation, suddenly, rather than by any deliberate action, sought the destruction of her own life. This over, the poor girl piteously besought that I would not leave the Home until the new matron, who was expected in a few days, should come, as all her being was filled with terror of the one who had thus treated her.

Is it any wonder that by this time my sympathy was so aroused, that I not only complied with the request, but ever after Jennie was a subject of special interest to me, and I suggested still further to the ladies who had been working with me in her behalf saying, that "men wear out suits by not being ready for trial and let us try it in Jennie's case." And, by the time court sat, we had a good reason for her non-appearance from the fact of her being the mother of an infant but a few days old. However, we had no plea to make in behalf of the man who had drawn her into this trap, but on the contrary, was only too glad to let the law take its course,

Digitized by Google

which consigned him to the penitentiary for two years. In Jennie's case we continued not to be ready for the trial, pleading also that the dear girl did not need to be tried for she was now just as earnest to lead a Christian life as we were, and thus we obtained the dismissal of the case from the docket. A wealthy lady visiting the Home, seemed to see Jennie somewhat in the light that I saw her, for she made her an offer of good wages in her home provided she would give up her baby. But the depth of her mother love preventing the acceptance of the offer, and the poor girl went out from the Home to make her way in the world as best she could with baby in her arms. But a few months experience of how hard it was to get a situation with baby and how very scant the wages she could earn, induced her to yield him up to foster parents and accept the situation under agreement that she was to stay with the lady at two dollars per week, and that the lady would also obligate herself not to give to her neighbors the story of the terrible ordeal through which the young girl had passed, and which, if known, would so blight and bar her future prospects.

The reader will understand by this, that this Christian woman was willing now to deprive herself and her neighbors of all the satisfaction that they might derive from rolling all this scandal "as a sweet morsel under their tongues." But it so happened that she was not long barred this privilege, for a young gentleman who made the acquaintance of the girl soon after her settlement in her new home, secured her hand in marriage some weeks before the year expired.

Now I am going to give the remainder of the narrative as it came to me from Christian ladies of the place, which was that this woman of so high standing, released now from her obligation, went to the father-in-law of the girl, some three weeks after her marriage, at the close of a Sabbath service, and disclosed to him all this bundle of scandal that she had hitherto been barred from vending. This may have been to her some satisfaction, but what was it to the young girl who

Digitized by Google

had just entered this family. She had her way to make now against all the prejudice that this intelligence might give rise to. She had been faithful to the instructions given her on leaving the Home to keep the sad story of her past to herself, revealing it only to the man who should claim the privilege of making her his wife. So faithfully had she lived up to this that when the offer was made, she simply answered, "If you knew all my history, you would not want to marry me." Not deterred by this, the young gentleman persisted in knowing what the history was she referred to, and, on hearing her sad story, his reply was, "Notwithstanding that, I will marry you, and before God you are just as pure as I am." Was it not honorable for him to make this confession? But, after all, was he not under as much obligation to confess his past life as she was hers? Although in very feeble health, I took a ride of twelve miles into the country, not only to see Jennie in her new home, but to shake hands with that young man and to tell him why I wanted to shake hands with him. I found Jennie happily situated in the home of her husband's parents, having by her correct, ladylike deportment so overcome all the disadvantage to which she had been placed by the vending of her sad story that I was happy to receive this expression from the lips of her mother-in-law: "I have taken as much comfort with Jennie as with my own daughter."

I will add a little more to make this bit of romance in real life end well, as novels generally do. The reader will remember the girl was led by the hard things she met to relinquish her child. Six months after she had parted from it and taken her new situation, she wrote to me saying, "Auntie, I am going back. I must have my child. It will surely kill me if I don't." But now, as the only real healing balm for this woe, I found in her arms another little boy three weeks old, and was able to bear to her the intelligence that, after making all the inquiry that I could in regard to the one from whom she was forced to part, I had come to the conclusion

Digitized by Google

that he had been taken up higher and no longer needed her tender care.

The differences of opinion between me and the Board continued to widen and deepen, while they on the one hand continued to shrink back from undertaking the reformation of the prostitute class, I, on the other, maintained that we were under obligations to do so, because money raised in the lecture field and the Legislature was given for them as much as for the girl, who had made but the one misstep. But while I thus urged the obligations we were under to continue to take that class, I saw the necessity of grading the girls, for in my estimation there were those who needed the shelter and privacy of the Home, yet in reality did not need to sign the agreement to stay any length of time for reformation. These were girls whose morals and manners were all good save the one misstep that no one could regret more than they did, and in whose care I felt sure that if they could be tided over this, their future life would bid fair to be as pure as though the one fatal misstep had never been taken. I had all along, too, promised that I would make the Institution self-sustaining as far as possible, and was decided in my judgment that in all cases where the parties were able to pay the expense of their board and care in the institution they should be required to do so. As I could not conscientiously take widows' quarters, first baptized with their sweat at the wash tub, perhaps, and then with my tears, as it always brought tears to my eyes as I thought of the many ways in which the poor woman had need of the quarter she would extend to me, saying: "I want a part in this. I have daughters. I do not know what may come to mine yet." I had a conscience against such money being used for the support of girls in the Home who were able themselves, or who had friends who were able to meet their expenses. There were opportunities also offered where we could care for a little one of unfortunate birth and receive remuneration for it, thus affording something for the girls to do by which they could help to pay the expenses of

Digitized by Google

the Home and at the same time shield the young mother as effectually as though she had entered the Home. This the ladies of the Board had been barely tolerating, when Dr. King, one of the ladies of the Board, received a telephone message from Dr. Priestley, with whom she was acquainted, saying, "I have rescued a little one likely to perish. Its board will be paid for. Will you take it at the Home?" Dr. King's large, motherly heart was opened at once for the reception of the little one and telephoned the matron of the Home accordingly, with the query, "Can you care for it?" To which she responded, "Yes." I was standing near by and said, "Tell her Mother Benedict says, 'yes,' too." So we three were implicated in what some of the ladies of the Board and Executive considered a woeful crime. Dr. Priestley receiving an answer telephoned the Home, "I will be there with the baby soon." As it was now bed-time I said to the matron and the assistant, "You are tired and had better go to bed. I have writing to do and will sit up and wait the coming of baby." I awaited, however, in doubt as to its coming, as a March blizzard was raging without and grew more severe as the hours went by, and I decided that the doctor, if he was a man of sense, would not bring the baby on such a night as that, so at midnight retired. The next evening we received another message from Dr. Priestley saying, "It was so stormy I dare not come up last night, but will be up to-night." Again I took the responsibility of waiting the coming of the little stranger, and was kept waiting until near midnight ere the sound of the door bell announced its coming, and, opening the door, a large benevolent looking man stepped in extending toward me a little market basket, saying, "I am afraid it is not alive. It was but barely alive when I started and the road has been so very rough it has taken me so much longer to come than I anticipated. Beside, I fear the effect of the severity of the cold on so very delicate a one."

I leave the reader to imagine with what feeling I took the little basket to the register, so that if there was life yet

Digitized by Google

remaining it might catch the first gleam of warmth, and began to unwrap the parcel in the basket. After removing two woolen shawls I came down to the little specimen of humanity of two pounds weight, as cold as it would have been in death. But yet I discovered there was still barely the breath of life there. Its little face looked as wrinkled and old as a man of eighty, and was as yellow as a Chinaman, and its little eyes like leaden specks, and yet, somehow, I felt a very tender and maternal yearning over the vapor of life before me, and was glad to have the privilege of caring for it not only for its own sake and for the Lord Jesus, to whom it belonged, but for the sake of the young mother also, whose pleading had touched the heart of the benevolent physician as she begged him to take it where it would be well taken care of, promising to work hard to pay its board until it could be adopted, saying, "It will kill my sick mother to know that I have had this child, and, too, you know that I have to work to support my mother; and, if this is known, no one will give me a place."

You may be sure, dear reader, that the five dollars that I received from the physician that night in advance for baby's board seemed to me sacred money, as I thought of the poor young mother ready to make such a sacrifice dividing between filial and parental duty.

To turn again to my little charge on whose person there was not an article of clothing suited to his small dimensions, I secured the smallest that could be found in the house and dressed and wrapped him carefully in flannel and carried him to one of the young mothers for food and warmth during the remainder of the night. In the morning as our attendant physician came in, I called his attention to the little stranger and he quickly decided, "He cannot live." Nevertheless, we continued to do what we could for him. But only three days had elapsed until the sacredness of our Christ like mission to the little one was sternly denounced by a self-constituted committee consisting of Mrs. Miller, editor of our State

Digitized by Google

organ, Mrs. Woods, superintendent of legislation, and Mrs. Aldrich, the State corresponding secretary of the W. C. T. U., who came to us arraigning us on the ground of what people would say if they knew that we were shielding the young mother from publicity by caring for her child, and as we had a bill then pending in the Legislature asking for a second appropriation, they were sure the Legislature would not grant it if it was known that we were doing that kind of work. I plead the best I could with them what was Christ-like, and queried, "What benefit could it be to the world to know and have the privilege of gossiping over that poor girl's misfortune?" The agony that it would be to her poor mother and what a mercy it was to shield her from the knowledge of that which would bring her such a world of sorrow. I plead also the need of keeping the girl's good name in order that she could keep her place and earn means to support her mother. But my opponents were inexorable. They still held the ground of, "What would people say?" The reputation of the Home was at stake, while I as steadily maintained, "What is Christ-like?" I plead, "This is one of Christ's little ones and it belongs to the kingdom of Heaven." But then as I had to meet them three to one, of course my chances for speech were few and far between. So I finally folded my arms and stood back saying, "Ladies, you do not frighten me a bit. I have seen just such Christians before, harping on what the world will say, and I stand here to tell you that I have no use for that kind of Christianity." I was as interested as they were in the fate of our bill in the Legislature, but I had too much faith in the fatherhood of that honorable body to believe that the caring for that little specimen of humanity, of two pounds weight, in the Home would at all endanger our bill. Had it not been for my interest in the appropriation I should not have been at the Home at the coming of the little stranger, so should not have been such a sinner in the eyes of the executives, or so deeply interested in the little treasure of life. I had been instructed by our sup-

Digitized by Google

erintendent of legislation that she could attend to the legislative work, and beside my influence would not be good in the Legislature as I had offended the G. A. R. in preaching a peace sermon some months before, to which one of them had taken great exception, so I had better remain in the lecture field raising what money I could in the interest of the work. At her official bidding I meekly obeyed and went to the field, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather to which I would be exposed in the winter season.

And, just here, I want to throw in a little of the work I did in Muscatine at the call of worthy ladies, two of whom were not only my helpers by encouraging me to go forth to the work of visiting houses of ill-fame in their city, but none too good to enter into the work with me personally. Of one day's work especially I want to make a record on these pages because it was just my idea of how the professed followers of the Lord Jesus should carry on his mission in seeking and saving the lost. To fully appreciate the work of Sister Fry of my own church and Sister———of the Episcopal on that memorable day, the reader would first have to go alone time and again behind the tight fence and into the presence of these fallen ones who had given themselves up entirely to the service of sin. But, on this memorable morning, I had not only those dear ladies to accompany me, but, instead of taking the long weary walk in order to reach the abodes of those I was seeking to save, one of the Lord's servants, the pastor of the Friends church of the city, kindly proffered himself as our escort and took us in his sleigh to the house where we made our first call, and, as our second would necessitate the climbing of a long hill, he kindly waited outside until we should have accomplished our first visit. In response to our rap at the door, it was opened, and we were kindly admitted and almost immediately realized the promised blessing "where the two or three are agreed on earth as touching the things we would ask." For, as we commenced to talk with the inmates, the power of the Lord was so sensibly present that

Digitized by Google

they were soon melted to tears and both inmates and visitors were on our knees voicing the prayer of our hearts. But, ere we had closed, the door opened and we realized that there was one more added to our company. On rising and looking around there was seated close by me the fallen unfortunate who had just entered. I but barely glanced at her, it not seeming just the time there to address her, but rather to go on telling of the benefits and blessing of the Home saying that "no girl ever need feel again that she has no home after being admitted there. For, as she graduates with the approval of the matron and Board of Managers, a situation will be found for her, and if, through expiration of time, sickness or any other unavoidable cirumstance, she looses her place, she can return to the Home as a child to her father's house, and, if sick, she will be cared for until she has recovered. Or, if she has only lost her situation and wants another, one will be secured for her. Then, turning to the new comer, I said, "How long hast thou been out in a bad life?" She answered, "Eight years." At the thought of what habits must have been formed in that time, and as my eye noted the marks of the past night's debauch upon her, somehow I felt like speaking more sternly than I had ever done before to any of these lost ones in such a place and said, "Dost thou live in this city?" She answered, "No, I just came over the river from Illinois," to which I responded, "Thou hadst better go back into Illinois. This licentions way of getting a living is a penitentiary offense in Iowa, and thou mayst be sent there." Just then came the benefit and blessing of the presence of one of the earth angels who accompanied me. For, as the Lord had led me out to do the scoring and probe deeply the wound of sin, so He led Sister Fry to pour in the oil and wine. As she approached the fallen one so gently and lovingly laid her hand on her shoulder, saying, "Maybe thou hadst rather go to the Home." While I stood in intense interest with my eye fixed closely on the countenance of our fallen sister and noted as the color came and went. But she did not hesitate

Digitized by Google

long until she said, "*I want to go to that Home.* For, since my earliest recollection, I never had a home. My parents died while I was very young, and I came up somehow being shifted about here and there until I had entered my teens when I was taken sick. And, while thus helpless was glad to accept the seeming kindness of a man who offered to take me where I would be well taken care of, but I found it was in a house of ill-fame. I recovered and sought work outside, but the story of where I had been followed me, and I was dismissed and fell back. But sickening of such a life, I again sought honest employment and each time would be followed by the same roproach and again have to seek shelter among my *professed friends* but *destroying* enemies. Thus I have alternated eight years." As she closed her little narrative of which I have given but a synopsis I said, "Then art thou in earnest that thou dost want to go to that Home?" She said, "I am in earnest and I do want to go." "Then all thou hast to do is to walk out with us. Brother Fry is waiting outside with his sleigh to take us to the top of the hill where we shall have to remain all day in visiting houses like to this. But he has a good Christian girl in his service at home and thou canst go with him and she will take charge of thee until we come home at evening." So saying, I took her hand and leading her from this den of vice she was soon seated in the sleigh side by side with us, the under-shepherds of the great Shepherd who manifested Himself as in harmony with the united rejoicing of His saints on earth with the angels in heaven over the finding of the one that was lost. I pause here to say that I would to God that I could have the same confidence in all the professed followers of the Lord Jesus among pastors and people as I had in the certainty of Brother and Sister Fry's co-operation in helping to save this lost one notwithstanding the humiliation as the criticisms of the church and the world that might come down upon them for their allowing such a one to be placed in their sleigh. And that was not all. When Brother Fry had driven us to the top of the hill we were to

Digitized by Google

get out and enter another like abode of vice, and he was to drive through the city with this lost one in his own sleigh, and give her shelter for the day in his own home.

As we enter on our second visit we are met at the door by a fine looking woman accompanied by two beautiful little girls whose large brown eyes not only attracted us, but filled us with admiration, and elicited the inquiry as to whose children they were, which proved a leading question to the life-story of the unfortunate before us, who, by her own confession, became mistress of a house of ill-fame while very young. But, on the promise of support from the father of her beautiful little girls, she had dismissed all the inmates of her house and barred the door to all gentlemen callers save himself, and for several years they had lived together as husband and wife and yet not married. While she spoke of this as Paradise compared with her former way of living, yet we could but present to her its illegality and in reality sinfulness. She listened patiently but seemingly unmoved until we made one appeal in behalf of her little girls who would soon be old enough to realize their disgrace through the manner of life of their parents. At this she broke down, knelt with us in prayer, and on rising with the tears streaming down her cheeks she promised that she would no longer allow the objection of her would-be husband's mother to his marrying a woman of her reputation to be a bar to legal marriage. We received this promise with gladness, and urging its early redemption we took our leave, calling at another place but a little way distant. Again the power of the Lord attended so that we gained access to the inner life, its temptations and its sinfulness. Full confession was made and firm promises of a pure life in time to come. Another manifestation of the power of God was vouchsafed in the contrition and tears of the inmates of yet another abode of vice. Here the day closed, Brother Fry coming to convey us home. During the day we had many times prayerfully thought of the rescued of the morning with mingled hope

Digitized by Google

and fear as to whether we would find her at Brother Fry's on our return at evening, or whether as soon as the influences were dispelled under which she had made her good resolutions, she would not seek her old associations before nightfall. On meeting Brother Fry for a few moments we were so running-over full of the victories given us of the Lord in the houses we had visited after he left us, that the thought to inquire after his charge was crowded out. But, as she came to mind and we inquired after her, whether she was still in the safe keeping of the Christian girl to whom he had committed her, he answered, "Oh, yes, we not only have her in safe keeping, but Theresa has also come and given herself up with the expressed wish of being taken to the Home." She, by the way, was a very noted character of the city whom we had visited and proffered the shelter of the Home a few days before. "Well, then," said I, "if these girls are in earnest, and want to go to the Home, I shall have to cancel all my engagements in the city," which involved a prospective large meeting in the opera house on the coming Sabbath evening, to which the ladies interested refused to give consent. Here Brother Fry again kindly offered his services, saying, "I can escort the girls to the Home as safely as thou canst, and will agree to take the six o'clock train with them to-morrow morning if thou wilt only stay and finish up the work." This settled, the evening was spent in arrangements preparatory to taking the early train, and, ere the nightfall of the coming day, these two notorious prostitutes were safely sheltered in the Home under the care of our devout Sister Rogers, matron of the Home, where we will leave them for a time and return to the work in Muscatine, of which the prospective meeting in the opera house was a striking feature. It was crowded to its utmost capacity, not an inch of standing room being left, and many obliged to go away not being able to gain admittance, so thoroughly had the city been stirred on the subject of social purity, or rather the social impurity of so many numbered with them as citizens.

Digitized by Google

The reader may be sure that I met this audience with trembling, notwithstanding my trust in the Lord, for exposure and overwork had brought on an attack of pneumonia, which had laid me aside for several days, and from which I was but partially recovered. I remember agreeing with the organist and leader of the choir to be ready at any moment with a song should I be seized with a paroxysm of coughing and obliged for a time to cease speaking. I have occasion again to note the support I had from Christian men and women. The array of ministers from the several churches on the one hand and the sisters of the W. C. T. U. on the other were to me as Aaron and Hur to Moses, as I rose to do battle for the right in this long neglected work which I entered into with no gloved hands or finger tip handling. Appealing to the ministers, I remember saying, "When our missionaries went down to Jamaica a few years ago and found families living where the father and mother had never been married, they persuaded them to appoint a day, have a good dinner, and have the nuptials solemnized, and I think, brothers, that it would be well for you to do some of this kind of missionary work right here in Muscatine," which they pledged to do, and I learned afterwards, did do to the effect of several marriages in cases of such illegal living, the father and mother of the two beautiful little girls before referred to being among the number. This much of victory together with the rescue of the two girls was cause of rejoicing. But I must confess that my rejoicing over the shelter of the girls in the Home was mixed with fear as letters came telling of three notorious characters from New Hampton being sent in the same week. There now was five. The question came, "What will the influence of these five prostitutes be among the girls in the Home?" But later, how I was rejoiced to receive from the matron the intelligence that in less than six weeks she found those five girls in a room by themselves holding a prayer meeting; the one whom we were about to send back to the State from whence she came being the leader.

Digitized by Google

Having finished my work in Muscatine and being on my way to fill other engagements I was met by a dispatch from the Home, saying, "Come at once." I had just received a letter from the Superintendent bidding me continue in the field, but as I contemplated, I thought a dispatch would outrun a letter and it would be safest to cancel engagements and respond to the telegram. On reaching the Home I was informed that some of the senator's wives had been out there telling the matron that unless "Mother Benedict" came in immediately we would lose our appropriation. Thus I had made the sacrifice of the work in the field to give the bill al] the support it could have from my presence in the Legislature. But now, going back to my arraignment before the self-made committee, Mrs. Aldrich, Mrs. Woods and Mrs. Miller, I was in the judgment of those women more than counterbalancing all the benefit that my presence could be to the bill by favoring the sheltering of the little helpless two pound babe in the Home and thus was making myself responsible for the loss to the Home should we fail to get the appropriation. Yet their persuasions were as powerless on me as mine on them. Each held her own opinion, but they had quite the advantage of me because of the influence they had over the Board of Managers, whom they soon called together and so spread their idea of evil before them that all but the noble Dr. King voted for a motion turning baby out of the Home. But ere I had learned their decision I came in from the Legislature one evening to learn that my baby was gone. Fortunately for the little fellow, one of the ladies of the Board who had voted with the rest was overtaken by the Lord on her way home and set to analyzing her vote. As she saw in it what they had really done in casting that vote, that they had turned one of Christ's little ones out of the lap of the united motherhood of the Christian women of Iowa and they had turned it out of the Home for which "Mother Benedict" had wellnigh paid out her life with *her* pleading, that the little one might be allowed to remain until it died or until it could be

Digitized by Google

adopted if it lived, and above all they had voted no earthly place for it to go to. She was not long in presenting herself at the door of the Home with her warm shawls saying, "I will never cease to be ashamed of that vote as long as I live. Give me that baby. I am going to take care of it for Mother Benedict, and I am going to start a Children's Home with it." This passed for a joke for a few days, as to what "Mother Benedict" was going to do with a baby with no home save the one from which it had been ejected, and where she was only occasionally sheltered for a few day's rest from her work in the lecture field. The joke soon ended in stern reality as the time for the Executive Committee meeting was near at hand to which our differences of opinion were referred as regarded grading the girls and as to whether babies that were not born in the Home might be boarded there for a reasonable compensation; thus giving the girls something to do by which a little income might be gained toward their support in the Home, and also give to those little ones of unfortunate birth a better opportunity for favorable adoption. This was squarely voted against by a large majority of the executive committee. The action of the Board also in regard to the little one for whom I had so piteously pled was ratified by the committee. To this I rose and said, "Ladies, if I have spent six years of my life for a Home, so cold that it will turn out one of Christ's little ones, of two pounds weight, unprovided for, it is time I had a warmer place. I will give you just six months to reconsider." The decision made by the executive committee being so unchristian, unwomanly and altogether so unreasonable in my estimation that I determined to bring it before the State Convention the coming fall. But in the afternoon session there came a motion suggested by an empty state treasury.

That motion was that one-third the Executive Committee expenses and one-third the printing of the State minutes be drawn from the fund of the Benedict Home.

Digitized by Google

The reader will remember that the project of the Home was objected to by the Executive Committee on the ground that I would get them in debt and in trouble, and arrangements had been carefully made and fixed in the constitution of that institution that the two funds were to be kept strictly separate, so that the Home could not draw on the State treasury neither could the Home fund be drawn upon for W. C. T. U. expenses. This was in accordance with my wishes as well as for their safety lest I should get them into trouble. As I had everywhere promised that not a dollar given for the Home was ever to be used for anything but the Home, that the W. C. T. U. sisters only handled the money in interest of the Home, therefore the reader can readily see what my standing would be before the people if any part was drawn from the Home fund for general W. C. T. U. expenses. I cannot tell you, dear reader, how I was shocked by this motion. I felt that our Home treasury had become a temptation to the Executive officers, for while theirs had been, as I have said, dry for some months the Home fund stood nearly $5,000 ahead, the Legislature having just given us $2,000 and Mr. Christian Winkler who died some months before, bequeathed us all of his little estate after a plain slab was placed at the head of his grave which netted us over $2,000 more. This added to what was already in the treasury amounted as I said to nearly $5,000. But a precedent was being set and my word would be broken. I rose and plead with tears saying, "Ladies, the moment you draw one dollar for W. C. T. U. expenses from the Home fund my word will be gone. I have promised to individuals, I have promised on the platform, I have promised in the sacred desk, and I have promised in the Legislature that not a dollar given to the Home was ever to be used for anything else. I remember well when I approached the Representative from our county asking his support to a bill asking for $5,000 appropriation, he being a license man said, "These women will take that money and run a campaign against us." We were running a campaign against them,

Digitized by Google

but we were not running it with money given for the Home. I promised him saying, "Representative Acker, not a dollar given for that Home is ever used for anything else but the Home and for the benefit of the poor unfortunate girls sheltered there." And on my word he so relied, that he not only cast his vote in favor of the appropriation, but, as he was not a public Speaker he wrote out the grandest eulogy on "Mother Benedict" assuring the Legislature of how long and how well he had known her and assured them how safe it was to trust money in her hands that it would be used for the very purpose which she promised. This he sent up and it was read from the clerk's desk when the bill was pending and had more power in it than any speech that was made.

To my pleading they yielded so far as regarded the printing of the State minutes, one-fourth instead of one-third of which was to be drawn from the Home fund. They reasoned on the ground that the printing in regard to the Home was contained in the State minutes. To this I replied, "Sisters, if you have a printing bill against the Home make it out and draw upon the Home fund to pay it but do not mix it as it compromises my word to the donors." But the motion was put and carried, that one-fourth the printing of the State minutes and one-third of the Executive Committee expenses should be drawn from the Home fund. I will not own to be one of the women of earth who have tears on all occasions, but I do own that during this discussion, and especially at its decision the tears were falling thick and fast as I rose and said, "Ladies, you have wounded any conscience. You have taken away the secret of my success. As your financial agent I tender you my resignation. Nevertheless I shall work for a Retreat also, where the class that are not provided for in the Home can be sheltered." For I had commenced the work with wide extended arms to the "*whosoever will*" and with nothing short could I be satisfied, and I sealed my determination by withdrawing from the meeting.

Digitized by Google

Oh, dear reader, how strangely I felt as I found myself alone in the audience room of the little Quaker church standing under the shadow of our great state capitol, where my work for the prodigal daughters had been so favored as to be twice appropriated for and for the interest of which I had nearly exhausted all of my God given powers and yet failed to have the slightest privilege granted me in regard to who might be sheltered there. Is it any wonder that in agony of spirit I dropped upon my knees at the altar and cried, "My Father, what next?" to which a response immediately came like the voice of a friend standing by me, saying, "What art thou crying about? Thou hast a house in Decorah, all thy own, better than the W. C. T. U. was able to buy after beggin for them two years. Go to the people. They will be just as ready to help take care of those that are not provided for in the Home as they were to help at the first." I believed it was the voice of the Lord and instantly rose from my knees, dried my tears and resolved to go to work. In the next morning's papers appeared my resolution. Although my wardrobe was threadbare and my poor worn frame in no better condition, yet, through the Lord strengthening me, I was ready for the battle. I received a good many visits from the sisters, laboring to bring me to understand my error and the wonderful sin of sheltering a poor girl from the criticisms of society in the saddest hours of her existence. And then, too, the very great sin of wanting that little baby sheltered in the Home until it could be adopted, when by so doing, its unfortunate mother would be shielded from disgrace. How strange that we Christian sisters should see things so differently. A dear sister of my own church, who chanced to be president of the Board of Managers, and who, by the way, professed sanctification, came to me so earnestly pleading the wonderful wrong I was in. I said that the baby was one of Christ's little ones and in our hands and it was in our power to care for it. I asked her what she proposed to have done with it. She answered, "Why, it ought to have been sent back where

Digitized by Google

it came from." "What," I said, "tempt that young mother again to take the little span of life it had." "Well, that mother," she said, "ought to be sent to the penitentiary." "Oh no," I said, "stay sister, she did not commit the crime."

Dr. Priestly, the good Samaritan, that he was, Dr. King, the Matron and Mrs. Walker (who, by the way, was the one who took the little darling to her home) removed that temptation from before her by providing for her child." "Well, she said, "it was in her heart to do it and she ought to be punished." "Well," I said, "If it will be any satisfaction to thee, go and get her and punish her if thou canst find her. I do not know who she is or where she is, but I do know where baby is, and I do know that it is one of Christ's little ones and belongs to the kingdom of Heaven and I recognize it as our duty to take care of it," and added, (maybe I said too much but I said it) "My sister, thy action in voting that little helpless being out of the Home unprovided for has caused thy sanctification to sink to zero in my balance." I did not say in the balance of the sanctuary where Divine justice weighs us all, it was simply in *my* balance as I saw it.

Leaving my baby in the tender care of Mrs. Walker I was soon again in the lecture field, and found that, as I presented the necessity of the additional refuge in order that the ground might be covered, the response of the people was just as generous and my collections larger, if anything, than before. While I was in the field raising means to meet the expenses, my adopted daughter, Susan A. Gove, of Decorah, was brightening up the old home with paint, paper and furnishings, so that in two months it was so far completed that alone in the old home whence all my own were gone I bowed my head over the first meal. As I looked to the Lord there came in the wonted familiar voice of the spirit, "*And the ravens fed him.*" I remembered the prophet and his peculiar situation and accepted the promise that in some way or other the Retreat would be provided for. My first assistants in the Retreat were two girls whose time had expired at the Home and

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

RAY, AT FIFTEEN MONTHS.
(The two-pound baby adopted by Mother Benedict.)

Digitized by Google

who came to me with their tiny babies in their arms. The one was a girl of talent and ability to manage with neatness and order, while the other was but barely capable of being a kitchen girl. Thus provided my thought turned to the little one who, though tenderly watched over by the faithful Mrs. Walker yet barely hung between life and death so that when I went for him, although three and a half months old, I could not be sure that he could either see or know anything. I will not attempt to describe to the reader what my thoughts and feelings were as I looked to the Lord with the query, "Must I take him if he is blind? Must I take him if he is feeble minded?" The answer seeming to come back in the language, that, as I had undertaken to protect the little one my duty was to take him as he was; I counted on how long I would have to provide for him in his helplessness ere he would be old enough to go to the feeble minded or blind institution. Yet, nothing daunted, by this foreboding, I took him from the arms of Mrs. Walker at midnight at the depot and took the train for Decorah watching carefully his feeble breathing fearing lest life might be extinct ere I reached my destination. I remember well the curiosity that was excited among the girls at the hotel, where I stopped next morning for breakfast, as word went to them through one of the lady boarders of what a tiny baby was in the parlor. They snatched their first moment of leisure from the kitchen and dining room and came en masse to look at the little wonder. He continued to be the wonder of the passengers as I came up the road. I remember, as I had him placed on a little bed on the seat before me and as I was bending over him in intense anxiety a hand appeared before me with the salutation, "How do you do?" On looking up I found I was face to face with the Governor of the State, who took a seat beside me and looking my baby over, for I had adopted him as my own, said, "You will never be able to bring that through." However, in that, Governor Larrabee was mistaken, for I had the privilege a few years later of introducing him to my boy, whom I had named

Digitized by Google

Ray, when a healthy chubby little fellow he was able to keep pace with me on the streets of Decorah.

Contrary to all human probability he began to mend immediately on reaching his new home. But I have failed to tell of Mrs. Walker's success in starting Children's Home with him which she had so far succeeded in that when I went for my baby she had seven others and benevolent and wealthy ladies of the city had taken the responsibility of starting the institution. I cannot tell with what satisfaction I have witnessed its growth as I have visited it from time to time. It soon outgrew the accommodations of Mrs. Walker's home and a building more commodious was rented, then still another of larger dimensions till under the blessing of the Father of the fatherless, it has prospered and grown till now it flourishes in a commodious and beautiful home of its own in the suburbs of our capital city. So out of that which had its origin in our differences grew the Children's Home in Des Moines and the Retreat in Decorah. But my battle with my opposers had but just begun. The president of one district, where I had been presenting the necessity of the Retreat in order that the whole ground might be covered and a provision made for the "whosoever will," wrote me accusing me of dishonesty and claiming that I was still the financial agent of the Home, which I had positively resigned two months before. Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Aldrich also wrote me claiming that I had not officially resigned. They also attended conventions and managed so far as they could to get resolutions passed against me. At one convention, however, at which I was present, Mrs. Aldrich came and begged leave to read a circular letter, which she and Mrs. Foster had gotten up to send to the local unions, which was about as misleading as lawyers are in the habit of presenting things, but it was ruled out as it was matter foreign to the interest of the convention. She met me, however, in private and read her letter, then in manuscript, and told me of her design to have it printed and sent to every local union. I plead with her most earnestly

Digitized by Google

not to do it as it was so misleading that I would certainly have to reply to it, and that it was not healthy to introduce to local unions any of the differences of opinion of the leaders of the work. But not being allowed to read her paper in the convention she came to my boarding place and persisted in reading it to my host and all his guests, the Congregational minister of the place being also present. I again begged her not to send out any circular, but to leave the subject until State convention and let it be settled there. In this my host heartily joined. I argued with her that the opening of the Retreat was simply another step over, and beyond the endorsement of the Executive Committee, and that she knew that every advance step in the work from the commencement of the founding of the Home had had to be carried on in just that way. I said, "You, the Executive Committee, tabled my plan at the first for the raising of means and the building of the Home." "Oh, no," she said, "We did not table it." "Well," I said, "You did simply nothing with it, and made no report to me whatever." Turning to my host I said, "What did they do with it?" "Why," he said, "in parlimentary rule they simply threw it under the table." My host joined me in an urgent appeal to her to refrain from sending out any such circular and to leave the whole matter to be settled at the coming State convention. But our persistent sister was so bent on not taking our advice and so intent on prejudicing the local unions against me in regard to my work in the Retreat that notwithstanding the reading of her paper in the convention had been ruled against, she rose to a question of privilege and verbally spread the whole matter of the difference between us before the convention placing it in the same false light that her paper did.

When she was through with her speech, I looked up to the president and said, "Now, may I make a speech?" to which she smilingly replied, "Most certainly you shall." I rose and made my statement which, of course, was adverse to that

Digitized by Google

which had been presented by Mrs. Aldrich, the minister before alluded to, being also present on this occasion.

The circular letter, however, was soon printed and out with all its misstatements calculated to bar as far as possible the way of the life of the Retreat. I was officially notified by Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Aldrich that they wanted to see me, but I had not the time to spare to go to see them. And as they did not come to see me, I wrote them that I would be at our district convention and would be glad to confer with them there. They were both present at our convention with their wonted purpose to throw in all the influence they could against the work as I saw it, but they passed and repassed me and made no reference to their desire to confer with me. The last morning the convention was in session, I called their attention to the fact that they had expressed a desire to see me, and I was here now to be seen, to which they hastily replied, "Let us retire at once to the prayer room of the church" in which the convention was in session. We had but barely entered on our conference until Mrs. Foster made the statement, "You told Mrs. Aldrich when you met her at the Waucoma convention that you were satisfied with that circular letter that we sent out." I said, "Most certainly I did not," at which Mrs. Foster said, "I see we cannot hold her to anything. She will say one thing one time, another at another. Go call in those ministers, and let them watch her." Obedient to the president, Mrs. Aldrich, called them. I, supposing that one of them at least was the minister who was present at the Waucoma convention, and so knew all about the matter as to my dissenting from the contents of the letter and to its being sent out, turned to appeal to him as witness of my dissent, to which action Mrs. Foster sarcastically replied, "He don't know anything about it. See how you get things mixed up." I then looked more carefully into the faces of the gentlemen to see whom they had brought in, and found it to be Brother Ferner of the Congregational and Brother McKinn of the Methodist church of

Digitized by Google

Postville, where the convention was being held, and who truly knew nothing about the matter. I then turned to my opponents and said, "The Waucoma delegation is present here at the convention, and know all about as to whether I expressed myself satisfied with that letter. Call them and let them witness." To this Mrs. Foster hastily replied, "We do not want them. These ministers can watch you. You do not hold to anything. You say one thing one time, another at another. Here write out your resignation as our agent," thrusting a little note book at me, I told here I had resigned, but I would reaffirm it at a proper time when I had leisure to do so but it was no time then. She talked on with what seemed to me browbeating and menacing, "You talk about us. We will prefer charges against you as the Quakers do." I folded my arms, however, and stood quietly thinking that when she came to the end of her talk I would try to have something like justice done me, and the Waucoma delegation called in, for I felt myself in a most painful situation to be charged with falsehood in the presence of those ministers. But ere I had a chance to reply it was announced that it was train time and we that were going west would have to leave the convention at once. And as we hastily adjourned, my opponents, not willing to cease their complaints, appealed to the ministers in regard to the collection I had taken the day before at the close of a speech, in a public audience, in which I had given a synopsis of the work for the Home, and presenting also the necessity of the Retreat as the rules for admission to the Home did not cover the ground of my desires for the unfortunates, humorously telling them that I was so used to taking a collection that a meeting did not seem complete without one, but that the collection that I was about to take was in the interest of the Retreat, and that the shadows of myself sent out into the audience were also for its benefit. And at the urgent request of Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Aldrich, the president of the convention also rose and explained that the collection that was about to be taken was not for the Benedict Home in Des

Digitized by Google

Moines but for the Retreat in Decorah. Notwithstanding all this explanation they urged that the collection should go to the Home and not to the Retreat. Here was a matter then over which I thought the ministers had some jurisdiction. On appealing to them, they decided that inasmuch as the collection was taken for the Retreat that it should go to the Retreat. But I parted with the worthy gentlemen feeling the heavy charges that had been made against me, in their presence, from which I had no opportunity of exonerating myself. Thus I took my seat on the train under an inexpressible weight of sadness. But, while I sat thus musing in my heaviness, querying almost with my Father in heaven why I had those hard things to bear, one of the ladies of our delegation seated just before me, turned and with a very happy face said, "Have you seen the good letter that Mr. Ackers got from that little girl that you rescued in Decorah?" to which I replied I had not. She then rehearsed the story of the letter. The rescue had been some six years before, and, now, the then little girl of six was just entering her teens and able to write a very interesting letter telling of her privileges in school and Sabbath school, and of the fine pony she had to ride and other little possessions of the farm stock that she claimed as her own. And as my thought ran back to the den of infamy from which I had rescued her, and what her situation now was to what it might have been had not the Christ hand been extended to rescue her, I said, "This is glorious pay if the work is hard and difficulties in the way." Just here the thought came to me that the lady who had addressed me might know something of the present condition of another one who had been rescued many years before, and, calling her attention again, I said, "Can you tell me anything about Amy Cora?" "Oh," she said, "Amy Cora is a happy wife and mother in a good home on our western prairies," and again my thought reverted to what Amy Cora might have been but for the Christ work of earth. And I said, "I can bear all that Mrs. Foster or Mrs. Aldrich or any like spirited ones can

Digitized by Google

heap upon me, so I can but have such glorious sheaves in the harvest."

It might be fair, just here, to insert the circular letter in question and my reply and reaffirmation of the resignation that I had made in the Executive Committee the previous April.

[TEACH ME THY WAY O LORD. LEAD ME IN A PLAIN PATH.]

HEADQUARTERS WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN
TEMPERANCE UNION OF IOWA.
CEDAR RAPIDS, JUNE 25, 1886.

Dear Sisters of the W. C. T. U.:

In response to inquiries and requests of women from our local Unions, we have thought best to prepare and send out a full statement of the action taken by the Executive Committee last April, in relation to the Benedict Home work. We do this in order to give an *official* answer to these questions, and because the best interests of the Home work and the relation to that work sustained by the local Unions, require on their part a clear understanding of that action, with the reasons therefor, and also, of Mrs. Benedict's present course in relation to the "Retreat." Only in this way can the present unpleasant differences between Mrs. Benedict on the one part, and the Executive Committee and the Board of Managers on the other part, be properly understood. Such a statement necessitates a plainer recital of facts than the Executive Committee heretofore wished to make. Mrs. Benedict desires to have the doors of the Home open to all classes of women who have strayed from the paths of virtue, viz: abandoned women whose undisciplined lives and drinking habits make voluntary subjection to the discipline of the Home almost impossible, they really needing mild prison discipline, which we are not authorized to enforce. 2d. Those whose diseased bodies need hospital care and treatment which we are unable to provide, and whose admission under the present limited facilities of the home might endanger the health of others, 3d. Those who through youth and inexperience, without being especially vicious in life or character, have unfortunately sinned, and whose greatest need is a little Christian help and counsel in order to restore them to lives of virtue and respectability.

The experience of the Board of Managers during the last three years, has led them to consider the last, as a more hopeful, and therefore, a preferred class of inmates; because a better and more successful reformatory work can be done in the present condition of the Home, if the inmates are *mainly* of that character. The Executive Committee has

Digitized by Google

approved these conclusions of the Board, notwithstanding Mrs. Benedict's objections.

The Executive Committee, the Board of Managers and Mrs. Benedict have all been united in the desire to make the Home an Industrial institution, and some efforts on a limited scale have been successfuly made in this direction, but the class of girls received (young and expectant mothers), together with the short time they remain in the institution, renders this a difficult experiment. The present *open* differences grow out of the question of industries proper for the Home, more even than the class of inmates admitted. As an establishment of an *industry of the Home*, Mrs. Benedict desired the Board of Managers last summer to receive an applicant for admission who wished to come, simply as a boarder, until after the birth of an illegitimate child and her restoration to health; the generous compensation offered for the board of said applicant and for the care given her by the other inmates of the Home during her stay, to go into the treasury of the Home. The Board objected to the establishment of such an industry, because of the secrecy desired, because they felt it to be unjust to those who came desiring reformation, to make such a distinction, simply because of the money to be received, and because the admission of such inmates was not in accordance with the avowed purpose of the Home as a reformatory institution, and would be prejudicial to its character and best interests, and to its reformatory work also.

This decision of the Board, with the questions involved, came before the Executive Committee at the last annual meeting and the decision of the Board was sustained.

A little before the meeting of the Executive Committee in April last, a a new born babe was admitted to the Home with the consent of Mrs. Benedict, and one member of the Board of Managers of the Home, but without any formal action of the Board. The request for the admission of this babe, came from a physician who was unwilling to give any information in regard to the parentage of the child, but did give an assurance that adequate compensation would be made for its board.

It is only just to the member of the Board alluded to here, to state that in the Executive Committee meeting she said that at the time her consent to its admission was given she did not fully understand the request of the physician, as represented above.

When the admission of this babe, in this way, was brought to the knowledge of the President of the Board, a meeting of the Board was held and they decided that such inmates could not be received, and this child could not remain as a boarder. At the meeting of the Executive Committee these facts in relation to the admission of this babe, and of the action of the Board of Managers, were brought before the Executive

Digitized by Google

Committee, and Mrs. Benedict, desiring the sanction of the Executive Committee to its admission, moved "That babies be taken to board as an *industry* of the *Home*." The discussion of this motion, and of all the questions involved in the decision of the Board to which allusion has been made, received careful, considerate thought, and occupied a large share of the time of the Executive Committee; and the Committee emphatically sustained the decision of the Board for the following reasons.

First. The admission of such inmates would necessitate a change in the Constitution of the Home, and the Committee were unwilling to make a change so radical, without the advice of the Annual Meeting. The object of the Home, as expressed in Article 2 of the Constitution governing the Home, "is to give refuge and Christian help to erring women, who *give evidence* of a desire to return to the paths of virtue." The Committee could not agree with Mrs. Benedict, that their simply coming for board and care was evidence of a desire to reform. While such inmates might receive benefit from the Christian influences of the Home, their stay would be too short for effective reformatory work under such circumstances.

Second. It would change the character of the institution. The Home was established as a reformatory and charitable institution, for the purpose of giving refuge and help to those who are not able to find it elsewhere. Herein lies the difference between the Home and the ordinary lying-in hospital. The latter is a business concern, taking care of women during confinement for money; the Home is a philanthropic and charitable institution, with reformation its *primary* object. Persons with money, unwilling to stay the required six months, can buy the care elsewhere—and their admission to the Home might crowd out the helpless poor whom we most wish to assist.

Third. The Board and the Executive Committee believe that the admission of this class of inmates will strengthen the prejudices of those who now, unreasonably, object to it, as more of a lying-in hospital than a reformatory. Furthermore, in asking for the legislative appropriation of money to aid the work of the Home, great stress has been laid upon the charitable and reformatory character of this institution, and it was felt that it would not be keeping faith with those who had voted for the appropriations for the Home, thus to change its character, nor with those who had given money for this charitable and reformatory work, and who would not approve the establishment of such a business, as an *industry* in connection with the Home.

Fourth. The Home has enough to do to care for the children of its inmates, without the reception of infant boarders. It has not the facilities for the establishment of a foundlings' home department.

Digitized by Google

The decision of the Executiee Committee found expression in the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the Board of Managers of the Benedict Home continue to adhere to the limitations governing the admission of inmates to the Home, as laid down in the articles governing said Home; and that in the institution of industries in the Home, no lying-in hospital simply for women to be delivered of illegitimate children, shall be established, neither shall the children be taken to board as a means of revenue, except the children of those who shall be or have been the inmates of the Home."

When this resolution was adopted, Mrs. Benedict, with much emotion, in her grief and disappointment, said, that she "should feel obliged to resign and *alone* undertake the work of providing for those who would thus be excluded from the Home;" but no action was taken by the Committee in relation to this utterance, and she did not formally resign. Not one of them wanted her to resign, but to continue the work for the Benedict Home, as heretofore. Within the next few days, without consultation with any member of the committee, so far as we know, a letter, signed by Mrs. Benedict, was published, in which she stated in substance that because of the recent vote of the Executive Committee, she should give herself to the work of opening her own house in Decorah, for the reception of just such girls and helpless babies as had been denied the shelter of the Home, in order that the provision for those unfortunates might be as broad as the love of Christ. The Saturday morning following the adjournment of the Executive Committee meeting the President of the Board of Managers went out to the Home and, turning to greet Mrs. Benedict, she said, "I am simply Mother Benedict this morning; I am not your Financial Agent any longer." At the regular Gospel Meeting at the Home the next Sabbath afternoon, in a little farewell talk with the girls, she said she "was going away to prepare a home for a class who were as needy as they were, but who had been excluded from the Home." The Tuesday following, the President of the State Union, cognizant of these facts, called a meeting, with several members of the Executive Committee who were still in Des Moines, at which all the members of the Board of Managers of the Home except one were also present, in order to advise with them in relation thereto. After careful consideration, it was the unanimous decision of those present, that *if* Mrs. Benedict felt it her duty to open the Retreat at Decorah as a private charity of her own, it was her privilege to do so as an individual, but in the present condition of the W. C. T. U. and Benedict Home work, the State Union could not be either *morally* or *financially* responsible for that "Retreat;" and, therefore, *while* she was engaged in the work for

Digitized by Google

the establishmont of the "Retreat," she could not be as heretofore the Agent for the Benedict Home of the W. C. T. U.

The President of the State Union was advised to notify Mrs. Benedict of this their conclusion, and to officially ask her to send to her as President a formal resignation of her office as Lecturer and Collector of Funds for the Benedict Home. Such a letter was written to Mrs, Benedict weeks ago, signed by the President and Corresponding Secretary, and also approved by the Recording Secretary and Treasurer of the State Union.

Afterward, no reply being received, an earnest appeal was again made to Mrs. Benedict to send in such resignation, in order to prevent any *appearance* even of antagonism to the Executive Committee, but no resignation has been received. From reports of Unions, given in County and District Conventions, we learn more fully than in Mrs. Benedict's letters in the *Messenger*, that in the meetings held by her since the Executive Committee meeting, the collections are taken for the "Retreat," instead of the Home. It is not to be supposed that Mrs. Benedict would intentionally misrepresent any person, or any fact, but if her statements are not incorrect, one thing is certain, persons who attend her meetings are getting *incorrect impressions* in relation to the Benedict Home work and the decision of the Executive Committee. It is also certain, that Mrs. Benedict is now endeavoring to fit up and open a "Retreat" at Decorah for the classes excluded from the Home; this "Retreat," to be opened as a private enterprise, under her own control, and that by her visits to the Unions, and in the meetings arranged for by them as a part of their W. C. T, U. work, she is now raising the money needed, in addition to her own private resources, to enable her to open up the same before the Annual Meeting.

We therefore feel it to be our duty to make this statement to our Unions, and ask them to carefully consider their own duty to the public charity established by the W. C. T. U. of Iowa, a charity which is not the property of a private individual, and which still needs the help of all our Auxiliaries. The appropriation, by our last Legislature, of $2,000, will not meet the needs of the Home if filled to its full capacity, as enlarged by the first legislative appropriation. The applications for admission are so frequent, that if the Home were furnished for them, it would soon be filled.

The women of the local Unions have placed us in charge of the general W. C. T. U. work and of the Benedict Home. We are your appointed servants. While we are conscientiously conducting the work in accordance with the constitutional provisions of the Home, and past decisions relating thereto, approved by the representatives of the local Unions, can we not only rely upon you to be true to *your* obligations to your own work and not allow your Benedict Home to suffer by a diversion of

Digitized by Google

funds, to the care of those whom the Executive Committee could not admit to the Home, as established by you, without first changing the Constitution of that Home, a change which they were not willing to make without the consent of the Annual Meeting?

If Mrs. Benedict feels it to be her duty to give herself to the establishment of this Retreat, we offer no hindrance to her individual work in this direction, but we do feel, that she should first resign her official connection with the Benedict Home of the W. C. T. U. of Iowa, instead of asking you to help her raise money for her own private establishment, against the strong convictions and the expressed decision of the Executive Committee, and while she is still your appointed agent for the collection of funds for the Benedict Home.

Had she acceded to the request, that by her own resignation she relieve the W. C. T. U. of Iowa of any connection with this new enterprise, no further statement than the report of the Executive Committee meeting and the former letter of the President in the *Messenger* of April 21st, would have been necessary.

We very much regret the necessity of sending out this letter, because of Mrs. Benedict's age and her arduous, prolonged and successful service for this beneficent charity of the W. C. T. U., originated by her.

We all honor and love Mrs. Benedict for her work's sake. We have endeavored to fulfill the apostolic injunction, "Be ye kind, one to another, tender-hearted—forbearing one another in love." Nothing has been done in haste, nor aught set down in malice, but Mrs. Benedict's presistent opposition to those with whom you have entrusted the Benedict Home work, leaves us no alternative, if we would be true to our duty, and worthy of your confidence.

May the God of wisdom, love and peace guide us all in the prosecution of His work to His own glory and the best interests of that work.

Yours faithfully,

J. ELLEN FOSTER, *President I. W. C. T. U.*
MARY J. ALDRICH, *Cor. Secretary.*
ANNA LEE MAHIN, *Recording Secretary.*
MARTHA J. DAVENPORT, *Treasurer.*

In all this lengthy explanation the real cause of my resignation, viz., the drawing upon the Home fund for W. C. T. U. expenses, the reader will observe is carefully left out as witnesses the following reply:

CIRCULAR LETTER,

DEAR SISTERS OF THE LOCAL UNIONS OF IOWA: I have before me a copy of an official letter sent out by the State Secretary to explain the

Digitized by Google

difference between me, the Executive Committee, and the Board of Managers of the Benedict Home.

The first statement to which I desire to call attention is, that "Mrs. Benedict desires to have the doors of the Home open to all classes of women who have strayed from the path of virtue."

If to this had been added, "Who gave evidence of a desire to return," it would have been strictly true. But to the statement that I want abandoned women taken into the Home I must deny the charge. And as witness, I call your attention to the hard work that I have done both in public and private by circulating petitions, and before the Legislature, to open the door of the penitentiary for this class, and having obtained the necessary law, I have everywhere recommended its enforcement. As to those who were diseased, I did ask for some modification of the rules so that those who were in the first stages might be admitted without violating rules. Indeed such have been admitted, and to many of them the Home has been a double blessing.

I did plead for the little three-pound (am informed by Mrs. Walker that he weighed only two pounds) baby, that it might be allowed to remain in the Home until it could be adopted, notwithstanding its inability to reveal the secret of its parentage; and, too, I did plead that the little unfortunate ones who were not born in the Home might be admitted as boarders, as thereby we would receive some revenue, and they stand a better chance of adoption. I did plead that the soul of the girl from the higher walks of life was just as precious in the sight of Him who died to redeem it, as that of the girl in the lower walks, and that to the unfortunate among the rich and cultured, as well as to the poor and uncultured, the door of our Christian refuge should stand open; and that while those from cultured society stood in as great need of being led to the Saviour as did the uncultured, they did not need to remain in the Home after their conversion long enough to have all their manners changed, as did the uncultured. And I did plead that those who were able to pay for their board and care should do so, that by the money thus gained we might do better by our matron, and those who assisted in serving them. Now when a motion was made and carried contrary to all my wishes, I did shed many tears and did say I should have to resign my position as Financial Agent for the Home at Des Moines, and turn my attention to providing a place for those who were excluded, but did not positively resign until it was moved and carried that one-third of the expense of the Executive Committee meeting, and one-fourth of the printing of the State Minutes should be paid from the Home fund. Then I rose and said: "Ladies, you wound my conscience. You take away the secret of my success. I tender you my resignation as your Financial Agent."

Digitized by Google

With me this was final, and I did say to the President of the Board of Managers: "I am simply Mother Benedict this morning. I am not your Financial Agent any longer." Having thus resigned to the whole Executive Committee, I have not been able to see the need of sending a written resignation to Mrs. Foster. But as I am complained of for not resigning to her, and being represented in the MESSENGER as still holding the position as Agent for the Home, I do hereby reaffirm, not only to Mrs. Foster, but to every Union and to every individual member of the W. C. T. U. of Iowa, that at the April session of the Executive Committee, 1886, I did positively resign my position as Soliciting Agent and Collector of the Benedict Home fund, for the reason that I could not conscientiously collect money for the Home when I knew a part of it would be used for other purposes.

I know that it has been argued in the MESSENGER that as well might the money used in paying the necessary expenses of the Collector for the Home be considered a diversion of funds. I would have been so glad to have borne my own expenses, and commenced to do so by the sale of books, but found that my health was giving way under the double burden, and fearing that my life would go out ere I had accomplished the great work I apprehended the Lord had called me to do, I left off selling books, and timidly asked the people to give me just so much for my personal use as would barely keep me in the field. This I was careful to explain everywhere, promising that aside from my necessary expenses every dollar should go to the Home. By making this promise I received hundreds of dollars—yes, thousnads, for the five thousand never would have been given by the Twentieth General Assembly had the slightest thought come to the minds of some who voted for it, that it would be thus drawn upon. It is also argued in the MESSENGER that because the ladies spend time in discussing the interests of the Home, it is therefore right to draw from the Home fund to pay a part of the expense of their coming together. To this I answer: The Home is one of the departments of the general work, and that if the Home fund should pay one-third of the expense of Executive meetings, and one-fourth of the printing of State Minutes, what does that argue but that all the other departments should pay at least the other two-thirds, and thus the State fund be relieved of the whole burden. It is argued that the other departments have no fund from which to draw. I answer they might have if their Superintendents would do with the money taken from the public as I did while lecturing and soliciting for the Home. It is clear to my mind that as every other department is discussed at Executive meetings and printing done without charge to the departments, the Home should share with the rest. A word now to the sisters who criticise me for opening the Retreat. I ask, what else remained for me to do, my life

Digitized by Google

being pledged to the work of giving Christian help and shelter to all who wanted it and a part of those seeking this help being excluded from the Home, which you will all admit I had been the leader in founding? Now I do not believe there is a woman among you who will admit that I could have led the Unions of our State on and up in this work for fallen womanhood until the Iowa W. C. T. U. stood head and shoulders above every other State, unless the Lord had first led. Now, sisters, in the name of my Great Leader I am only going on with the work, notwithstanding the adverse judgment of the Executive Committee.

If you sisters will only take the pains to review this work, you will find that almost every advanced step from my going forth with my plan talked at the first to the opening of the Retreat at last, it has been carried on without the sanction of those dear sisters whose minds were so running over full of other lines of work that they had not time to consider this in all its bearings, so jumping at conclusions, without due thought, have many times thrown almost insurmountable barriers across my way. But "hitherto the Lord hath helped me" through the instrumentality of the local Unions, the Legislature and other good people of the State. While I am not any longer your Soliciting Agent for the Home, I shall work for its interests all that I can consistent with the burden that devolves upon me in caring for those who may come to me of the classes who are excluded from the Home.

As well as for the building of the Home my purpose at the first was to close every den of ill-fame in Iowa. For this purpose I am still in the field as your Superintendent of the department for the Promotion of Social Purity, to co-operate with the Army of the White Cross, and ready to come at your call, and do you all the good I can.

LOVINA B. BENEDICT,

Superintendent Dep't Social Purity, Co-operating with White Cross.

By the declaration of the circular it will be observed that I was still State Superintendent of Social Purity and thus a member of the Executive Committee, notwithstanding my resignation as the financial agent to the Home, and as such made out my report to the coming State convention, which somehow disappeared from the hands of the state secretary and so never made its appearance in the convention. I had all along comforted myself with this privilege of report, and also the pleading of my own cause before the women of the State to whom I had been so misrepresented, but at the last decided to be absent from the convention rather than to be

Digitized by Google

present and present anything that would show differences of opinion in the W. C. T. U. of Iowa, as our convention at that time was held in Sioux City, so immediately following the death of our martyred Haddock. Thinking it better that notwithstanding what I might have to suffer, or how hard I might have to struggle to maintain the life of the Retreat, it had better all be borne than to present any division of sentiment in the temperance ranks at a time and place that was so hallowed by the death of our martyr.

Although they struggled so hard to hold me as the money gatherer for the Home, yet it was manifest by the action of this convention that they had no further use for me as the Superintendent of the department for the Promotion of Social Purity in the State of Iowa, and from that time "Mother Benedict's" name appeared no more in our State organ save it was in close criticism, and I was so barred from making any defense that not one word from my pen could find a place in the *Messenger* as witnesseth the statement of Mrs. Aldrich in reply to my appeal to her as one having some authority, at least, to say whether or no I should have the privilege of defending my position through the paper that was unjustly representing me and barring the way of the life of the "Retreat" as a part of the work for the unfortunate to which I had at the first apprehended myself called of the Lord. "Mrs. Benedict, if we should allow you to talk to the women of Iowa through the *Messenger*, they would soon all think as you do," and as also witnesses the following letter from the editor.

DES MOINES IOWA.

MRS. BENEDICT:—The *Messenger* can carry no appeal to the Iowa W. C. T. Unions for money and support for an institution that does not belong to the organization, and has no claim upon it. I do not understand the standard of right and justice that animates one who could make such an appeal, when it means just so much bread and butter taken out of the mouths of the inmates of Benedict Home.

FLORENCE MILLER.

Digitized by Google

Indeed, when I begged for space for the foregoing circular letter, it was denied me, and that was not all I met with, as I had called on our editor in her own home and was pleading my right to be heard through the *Messenger*, when Mrs. Miller's husband entered with these words, "There is not room for you and me in this house." Of course, as the home was his, I picked up my papers and walked out, and we finished our discussion on the pavement where I felt I still had a right to stand and where the matter was compromised in this wise: I said to Florence Miller, "Thou canst have thy choice. Give place to this circular in the *Messenger* or thou canst meet it in public print." To this she replied, "I had rather be at the expense of printing it as a circular letter and sending it to the secretary of each union." To this I assented, so that my side of the question, perhaps, was never read even by the secretary of the unions to which it was sent, for at that time the multiplicity of printed matter was very cumbrous and a heavy draft on the time of the officers of the local unions. I was so afraid I would do something wrong in giving this difference between the workers of the W. C. T. U. to the public that I yielded perhaps more than I ought to have done for the work's sake, and yet I had been put on record in the leading Democratic paper of the state some months before over the signature of the Superintendent of Press Work in language that was misleading and wounded me deeply, called forth by the criticism of the Executive Committee and their treatment of Mother Benedict, from the pen of the Hon. J. H. Keatley, who, by the way, was one of the committee of the Legislature of the 21st General Assembly, to visit the Home and report as to whether we had made judicious use of the $5,000 given us in the 20th General Assembly.

MRS. BENEDICT AND THE HOME.

Editor Leader: In this part of the State we have just learned from authentic sources that Mrs. Benedict has been supplanted in the management of what is known as the Benedict Home for unfortunate and fallen women, and located at Des Moines. Coupled with this intelligence is

Digitized by Google

the statement that Mrs. J. Ellen Foster has acquired control of the institution, and that Mrs. Benedict now has nothing to do with its management. We also understand that this change is not without a protest on the part of the estimable Quaker lady who, through much obloquy and doubt even of those most desirous of aiding the work, struggled to make her Christian efforts a complete success.

I may be pardoned for expressing an emphatic dissent from this change, unless it can be made to appear that Mrs. Benedict was unfitted for the trust which she has so far, according to my judgment, administered with evident success. * * * It is a well known fact, that for many young girls who for the first time have stepped aside from the path of womanly rectitude, there is little encouragement from their own sex, to retrace their steps, and that there are thousands of men who are constantly lying in wait to lead such unfortunates further away from those graces which adorn true womanhood. The institution was established to aid those who need such aid at the most critical period where every tendency is downward. In that respect it has been a marked success. The committee as an entirety, and through its individual members were made aequainted with numerous instances where thorough reformation was accomplished, comfortable and secure homes secured out of reach of temptation, and a new and a happier life begun and assured. It would counteract the work of the Home to specify these instances. The fact that they are kept from the general public, and private misfortune concealed from the curious gaze of those who could not and would not appreciate such a holy and sacred effort, are the means in a great measure, in accomplishing the work attempted by the good women engaged in it.

I have not the least desire to detract one iota from the credit of co-operation given by those in the directory of the institution, who have aided Mrs. Benedict in what has been done. It is not a work in which glory is won. It is no place in which to win those rewards and prizes which human ambition covets; but it is only just to say that far more of success is due to the efforts of Mrs. Benedict than the general public are aware of. She is an enthusiast—not as the term is offensively and reproachfully used, but in that higher Christian sense, by which obstacles of the most disheartening kind are surmounted. She is a true representative of the earlier Friends' societies. Her dress is of the simple undemonstrative character of the Quakers of forty years ago. The religious denomination which she adorns with a worth that comes from Christian simplicity and benevolence, recognizes the capacity of women to do much of the real religious work of the world, and Mrs. Benedict has been simply doing what her willing hands found to do. If it be

Digitized by Google

true that she has been supplanted, and if this change has not been brought about by some overpowering consideration which goes to the very success of this mission of womanhood, a greater wrong has been done to the cause than to Mrs. Benedict.

It is only fair to say it, and I say it from personal knowledge, that the quiet, persuasive manners of the little frank and plain-spoken Quaker lady, Mrs. Benedict, had more to do with unloosing the purse of the State in aid of the Home during the last session of the Legislature than any one influence. This is said, too, without any desire to detract from the efforts of others tending in the same direction. If there is lurking in this change that ambition of leadership which too often mars the prospects of the most holy of causes and objects, the sooner steps in that direction are retraced, the sooner will a great wrong to the unfortunate be undone. It is confidently said that such an ambition lies at the bottom of this. If that is true, it is time to give warning that the people of the State are in no forgiving mood when such motives in such a cause make their appearance. Mrs. Benedict may not suffer much by such a public humiliation. She has that consolation which is so able to surmount the ordinary disappointments of life, but behind her is that sense of justice and fair play in the common people of the State who will not be satisfied with less than a most complete vindication of the charge for the good of the cause alone. If there is merely woman's envy in this, such an unworthy passion had better never been cherished in connection with such a sacred cause. Brilliant talents and shining accomplishments never will wholly obscure injustice. JNO. H. KEATLEY.

Council Bluffs, April 25.

The above extract from the Hon. Keatley's defense may seem of small moment to the reader, but it was a solace to me, barred as I was from making any defense through the W. C. T. U. State organ, which viewed me in the light of having engaged in that which the Christian conscience of the W. C. T. U. of Iowa could not endorse, while to me it was but a part of the grand whole that was compassed in the plan given me of the Lord for the extermination of the brothel through providing a refuge for its inmates, and so caring for the unhappy victims of seduction as that they should never sink into prostitution through seeking refuge in those dens of infamy in the hour of their great extremity, as I had found in my experience in the work that it was from this very

Digitized by Google

source, that these soul and body-destroying institutions have been recruited all the ages.

As I write, there arises before me a figure cast in beauty's mold that I met in the loathsome jail under the court house in our capital city. I say loathsome—maybe the reader will allow me the word when I say that while I stood conversing with this beautiful victim of vice her supper was brought and set on the table, where the next moment came a splash of dirty water, I presume from the scrubbing of one of the offices above.

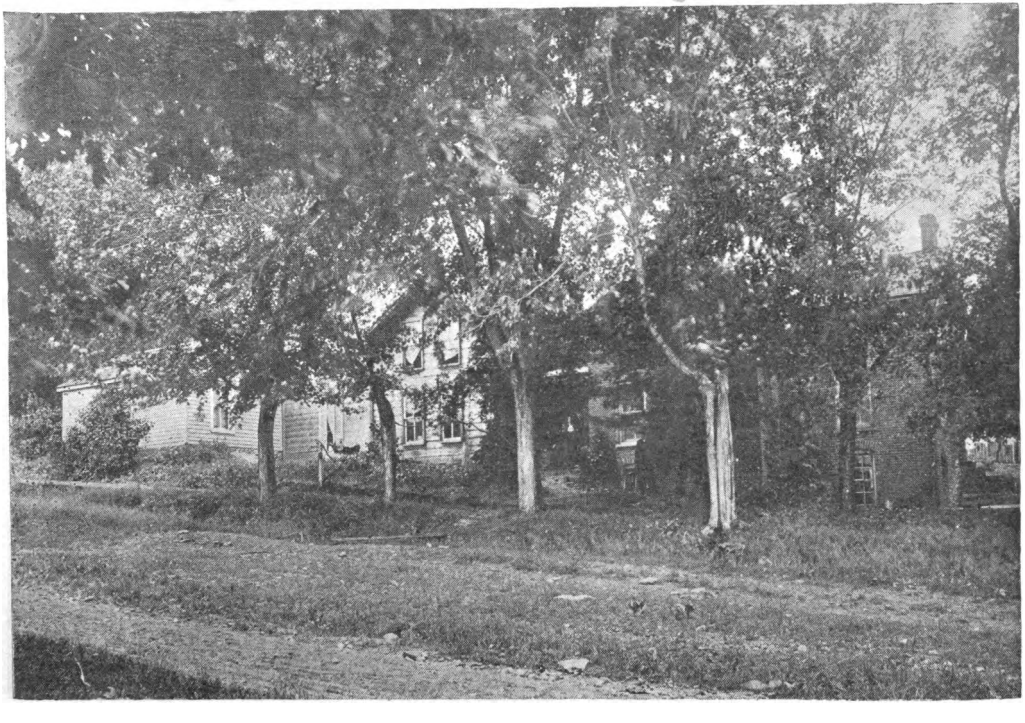
But this is a digression. There stood before me not only beauty, but intelligence. Why was she there? Serving out her fine for keeping a house of ill fame, for this was before the statute of the State of Iowa made prostitution a penitentiary offense, not only for the keeper but inmate and visitor. It was, too, before the Home for which I was struggling had come into actual existence, so I had nothing to offer her but reproof for the life she was leading. But how was my burden of reproof turned from her to those Christian women who should have stood by her in the hour of her extremity, as she went on to tell me the story of her seduction and of the safety of her beautiful child. I can almost see it, with its large blue eyes and golden hair, whenever memory reverts to this painful interview.

"My child," she says, "is safe with my father and mother, with whom I, too, had a careful training in the Presbyterian Church. But, after my misfortune came, I could not bear the cold snubbing that I got, and I stepped back and back until here I am. It is too late, too late for me."

Oh, dear reader, how will that "too late" sing out on the ears of those Christian women, who might have saved her, when that great day shall come when you and I and all will stand before the final bar. But, although despair had taken possession of her soul in regard to herself, yet she was not past feeling for others for she said, "There is a young girl in my house that wants to reform and I think she can. I wish

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE RETREAT.

Digitized by Google

you would go and see her." Taking her directions I sought and found the first house of ill-fame that I ever entered in our capital city. I was readily admitted and in my interview with her in whose interest I had come, found that she was not only ready but anxious to listen to anything that proffered a door of escape. The last I heard of her, she was doing the best she knew, but the last I heard of the one I found in jail, she was drinking herself to death as fast as she could. The serpent of the still without whose soul and body benumbing influence no prostitute could endure the life she leads, had her so completely in his coils as to render her powerless to resist him without the aid of the refuge and Christian shelter that I was struggling then so hard to bring into existence for the benefit of those who should come after her. It was for this class who, although reared in cultured society, had taken the one fatal misstep that the Retreat, so objectionable to our Executive officers and others of the Executive Committee, had been opened.

While to me it was the most sacred and important part of the work, to them it was so far the opposite of all Christian work that one of the Executive Committee, who had always been in the deepest sympathy with the work for those who were low down and needed reformation, said to me on one occasion, in reference to this work for the better class, "You have taken yourself out of the Lord's hands and out of His service."

I will leave the reader to judge of this matter after making this statement; that in the large experience I have had in seeking out the cause I knew not, I found that from this very class came our procurists and keepers of houses of ill-fame, and that, from forty years' experience in putting out the hand of a Christian and motherly care to the unfortunates of this class in their first misstep, I had never failed to save the victim of seduction from adding one more recruit to Satan's hosts of evil, in the most deadly form, but, on the contrary, had added one to the noble ranks of womanhood with

Digitized by Google

hearts so enlarged through suffering as to be of more value for good in the world than they would have been but for the fiery ordeal through which they had passed.

And, by the way, dear reader, this is my teaching to these sorrow stricken ones as they come under my maternal and Christian care. My hope, and faith and confidence is that "as you now give yourself to the Lord you will be a more humble servant of the Lord Jesus and thus develop into nobler womanhood of more value to Him in the great battle of right against wrong in the world; and, having been thus developed through suffering, I look forward for you to a more glorious crown in the great hereafter."

I do not say, dear reader, that I am thus hopeful of all who come under my care in the Retreat. For the grading that I saw so necessary for the perfection of the work I have not been privileged to carry out. The door of the Home has been for years closed to a class which are much in need of its sheltering benediction, while, from the Retreat, no applicant has ever been turned away. No matter what her condition might be she has been admitted and given a chance to reform if she would.

Thus the reader will easily perceive that the institution has not been a money making business as my opponents presumed for it. My worn out being, also witnesses to the struggle it cost me to in some way secure the needed means for shelter, warmth and food, without which the institution must close; and, too, the inconveniences endured ere its accommodations equalled what they now are. And I have not forgotten the days when I did all the out-of-door part of the work myself in order to shield the inmates from the gaze of neighbors who professed to be so horribly shocked by such an institution in their midst. They could very passively endure a house of ill-fame, but a place of reformation by which the inmates might rise from their misfortune was quite beyond their endurance. So, to be as merciful to them as possible, instead of sending a strong girl to the pasture to milk the cow, I used

Digitized by Google

to go myself, and I distinctly remember one dark rainy morning of being just a little too late. Bossy had disappeared, and had gone into a wood pasture of over 120 acres that was one continuous series of bluffs and ravines. But our little ones must be provided for, so the cow must be pursued and milked.

I would like high, professing Christian sisters, living in ease and luxury, just to follow me, little specimen of humanity as I was, loaded down with the added weight of falling rain that was not only coming straight down upon me but swept from the brush as I passed through it, until, at the far end of the pasture, I found the object sought. Then with my pail filled with milk I left the woods and sought an easier way home, so wearied that as I sat down my pail and paused for a moment's rest, nature exclaimed: "This is too hard. It is unreasonable that thou should have to make such a struggle to carry on this work." The enemy, too, came whispering just the things that some of my opposing sisters had said before: "You never can stand it; it will wear you out." But from this discouraging reverie I was aroused as my eye fell on two empty houses but a short distance from me. In a moment memory carried me back to a time when these were occupied as houses of ill-fame, and I knew by whose effort some of the inmates had been reclaimed and others caused to remove from our city, and memory lighted on another and another of like plague spots that had been removed from our own and other cities. And again I bowed my head in submission; yes, more than submission, for there was in it something like the triumph of joy. "It is worth laboring for; it is worth wearing out not only one life but many lives, so that we may but be coworkers with Him whose mission from Heaven to earth was to destroy the works of the devil." Thanking God and taking fresh courage I took up my pail of milk, and found it seemingly not half so heavy as it was before.

My garden, too, where all my summer vegetables were grown, was worked by my own hands; add to this the responsibility of directing and doing much of the work in the nursery

Digitized by Google

and kitchen; yes, and many times acting the part of physician in the ministry to the sick; holding myself in readiness to respond to any call in the lecture field; answering the varied and numerous letters that were continually coming, many of them of such a close judging and criticising nature as would have crushed me but for the help of Him who had called me to the work, and was ever near, redeeming His promises to sustain. But there came a time when nature gave way.

After having visited the Legislature in interest of an appropriation for the Home, and also to counteract the judgment of our State Superintendent of Legislation in reference to establishing a woman's reformatory at Anamosa in connection with the penitentiary, having encountered two blizzards, one in going and another in returning, beside doing my work while in Des Moines, in the severest weather, is it any wonder that on returning and taking up again the burden of my home cares that I arrived at the point where nature could hold out no longer, and for months I hung in the balance a mere skeleton with the verdict of all who had any interest in me adverse to my struggling any longer in what appeared to them such an unequal combat with the prince of the powers of darkness. But, to their arguments either of reason or persuasion, I had but one answer, "My life is pledged, and I am not dead yet." While thus hanging between life and death, and steadily holding the fort in opposition to the advice of friends, the grand adversary, whose kingdom I was so damaging, sent out one of his agents; I am sorry to say it was in woman's form, but, nevertheless, it was a woman who made herself very conspicuous for a time, in circulating a petition to the city council praying that worthy body to have me with my dependent charge, removed as a nuisance. This, coming to the knowledge of my dear daughter and my sister who as ministering angels watched over me during all these weary months of suffering, very urgently plead it as an additional reason why I would have to close the Retreat. But with this I felt that I had nothing to do, save Hezekiah-like, to spread

Digitized by Google

it before the Lord, and received no damage by this one more attempt of the devil to drive me from the field. Thus, resting in the Lord's hands, I came slowly back, not to health, but to a sufficient degree of it to enable me to continue not only to hold the door of the Retreat open, but, under the blessing of the Lord, to enlarge its accommodations and still continue to the present hour to minister both to the spiritual and temporal wants of the unfortunate. But, dear reader, this was not done without many faith-trying seasons. At the close of the following autumn, as winter was approaching and my treasury very low, and repairs so very necessary to be made ere the severity of winter was upon us, I remember of often passing hours of wakefulness and prayer when all about me were sleeping, until, one night, this blessed answer came: "Let this matter rest now until morning, and then write Mrs. C. C. Sinclair all about thy needs." This, as a balm to my woe, soothed me to sleep in a very short time, and in the morning I awoke refreshed, and with my pen spread my burden before the dear sister who, in a few days, sent me the following note, with the needed help, which relieved our present wants and helped to tide us through the winter:

AUGUST 14, 1889.

DEAR. MRS. BENEDICT: I am always glad to help you in your work of rescue and enclose herewith a draft for $100 for whatever use is greatest in that work. May God give you the greatest success in winning soul and body for Him.

Yours sincerely,
C. C. SINCLAIR.

And again, as the next winter was approaching, with the usual increase of our family and its increase of expenses, without the means to meet them; as I was looking to the Lord, there came a glad surprise on opening a letter from my son, dated at Duluth, which read as follows: "It is terribly cold up here and I am afraid my little mother is not comfortably supplied for the winter, so send my Christmas gift beforehand," which was a check for another hundred. And

Digitized by Google

again, when a mortgage note, on the house and lot I had purchased as an addition to the Retreat, was coming due, while I lacked two hundred dollars of enough to pay it, to my joyful surprise, a letter came from my faithful son containing a draft for two hundred dollars. At still another time, when pressing want was so nearly upon us, came a round hundred from Mr. and Mrs. Callanan. And so, at all times when our wants have been pressing, the needed funds have come, not often in hundred dollar drafts on our Heavenly Father's bank, but so oft repeated have been the raven bits that while more than two hundred souls, for whom Christ died, have been folded in the sheltering arms of the Retreat, our oil and meal have never failed, while these have been ministered to until the firey ordeal was passed and the little ones placed in good families by adoption, or a situation has been secured where the young mother was privileged to take her babe with her. But these opportunities have been so rare as to make it a necessity in nearly every case for the young mother to part with her child in order to gain for it a home and for herself an honorable situation at service.

This separation between mother and child has ever been to me the most painful ordeal of all that I have had to bear in this rescue work. I can stand by and minister to the young mother as she goes down to death's door to give to the world another life, but, when the time comes for her final leave taking of the little treasure, for whose life she has paid so great a price, both of mental and physical suffering, I must confess that in weakness I turn away and leave to other hands the task of taking the little one from the clinging mother's arms, to which it is never to return, and of its whereabouts she is never again to know. For, as a rule, the foster parents who take them for their very own, forbid that the real mother should have any clue by which she could find her child.

There have been repeated instances in which my mother heart sat in close judgment on the unfortunate girl. I will

Digitized by Google

give just one and leave the reader to judge whether my judgment was just.

Responding to a rap at the door of the Retreat, a father introduced himself as seeking shelter for his sixteen year old daughter who had been allowed too much time alone with a schoolmate, also in his teens. In this, dear reader, who was most to blame, parents or child?. I leave you to reflect while I go on with the story of the agreement that had been made between father and daughter that, with a view to saving her, himself, and all his family from disgrace, he would pay for her board and care in the Retreat provided she would return to him, leaving her child for adoption.

On these terms she entered the Retreat, but had not long been under my observation until I saw that to separate her from her child would be no easy task and so wrote her mother, but to this received a reply of such cold indifference as to deter me from further correspondence until dear Minnie had passed the firey ordeal and baby was folded in her arms, when in reference to her agreement with her father, she said, "Nothing but death shall ever separate me from my child. Other girls have worked hard for a living and so can I." She had shown herself so calm, so considerate, so womanly beyond her years during all the months that she had been with me as to give to her declaration a depth of meaning that called into action my best efforts to avert the calamity to one so young of being barred from her father's door. And I again appealed to her parents pleading what their daughter would suffer at parting with her child and of her determination to face the world with her baby in her arms rather than to suffer the separation. I thought I had some vantage ground as I knew that the parents had lost a baby boy for whose society they so yearned that they were anxious to adopt one to fill its place, for, at the time the father came to the Retreat seeking shelter for his daughter, my little Ray, who figures so largely in my story was some ten months old, and, to him, bore such a striking resemblance to his loved and lost one that he would

Digitized by Google

gladly have taken him to his heart and home. So I made my pleading, referring to their baby boy they had given up to the care of the angels while their hearts were made so desolate by the void he had left, and entreated that Minnie's little boy might be the one to fill it, and she still be saved the awful alternative of separation from her child or forever being exiled from her parent's home. To this outlay of all my ability of brain and tenderness of my mother heart, I got simply the cold, stern reply, "We are ready to fill our part of the agreement, and, if Minnie comes home without her child, she will meet a warm welcome. But if she clings to that, she will have to make her own way in the world." In cases like this where the grandparents were abundantly able and could have given the little one their parental care and their daughter the privilege of caring for and enjoying her own without the world ever knowing the connection between them. I say again, I can but sit in stern judgment. But in this particular case, the good providence of our Father in Heaven came to our relief. Minnie was not long barred from her father's house, for, ere she had left the shelter of the Retreat, the dear little one, forbidden the shelter of her earthly father's house, was called to the bosom of her Father in Heaven. All the time I was thus prayerfully pleading in Minnie's behalf there was before my mental vision a real life picture that I met in a house of ill-fame. She had been driven to despair by the severity of a father so like that of Minnie's. For the time was when she, with her baby in her arms, and on her knees begged for admittance at her father's door only to receive from him a positive refusal.

While my sternest judgment comes down on such parents my warmest sympathy goes out to those like to the poor widow into whose arms I secretly placed her daughter's child to see her with tears running down her cheeks fold the tiny creature closely to her bosom saying, " We will never miss the bite of one," as the saying is. In this case the daughter could keep her position where she could earn sufficient to sup-

Digitized by Google

port her mother and child provided her sad misstep was kept from the world.

"A letter from my granddaughter. An instance in the life of the Retreat."

"DEAR GRANDMA.—I write to beg shelter for a girl whose acquaintance I have just made here at the hotel where I am stopping. The landlord and landlady say they cannot allow her to remain here, and what can she do unless you take her in? She has confessed to me her sad story, and I have promised to aid her. I do not know where the means for her support is to come from, but, Grandma, you must take her. She seems like such a nice girl."

A favorable response to this urgent appeal of my foster granddaughter soon brought the unfortunate to me, and I found her to be a very nice girl indeed. And yet, somehow, the fatal misstep had been taken, and all her future life must be shadowed by it, if she be not shielded from the gaze and cruel criticism of the world. How deeply she appreciated the sheltering arms extended to her cannot be expressed in words. She had left her home with no other purpose than to hide somewhere until the cloud that so threatened all her future was overpast, not knowing at all where that hiding place was to be found. Was it by chance, or was she guided by a kind Providence, to the town, and to even the hotel where my granddaughter was making her home during the canvass of the city, and thus was pointed to the shelter of the Retreat, where she was kindly cared for, a temporary home secured for her little one, and she was again returned to society, from which for a time, she had simply dropped out. And to-day she is the happy wife of the father of her child, who some years before would have been her husband had it not been that he, for a time, sought in the deadly bowl that consolation for reverse of fortune that has proved the destroyer of the manhood of its thousands. While their little one is in the eyes of the world their adopted son, to them he is all their own, a priceless treasure.

In contrast I will portray another character of real life who starting out for the same purpose of shelter, instead of

Digitized by Google

being guided to the shelter of the Retreat was met by a procurist, who suspecting her sad condition, acted the part of the confidence man, making it her way to leave the train just where the poor girl did and go to the same hotel, and to continue to show a great interest in her until she got her sad secret, then said, "Come, go with me, and I will take you where you will soon be all right." The poor girl rejoiced to find what she took to be so kind a friend, and was easily persuaded to accept the offer, and by this fiend in woman's form was taken beyond the bounds of Iowa, and ushered into a house of ill-fame kept by a gray haired woman who somehow had eluded the grasp of the devourer that makes such short work of woman's life in such places, and had attained her seventieth year, having grown old in what seems to virtuous womanhood, the sin of sins. After having kept the poor girl a prisoner for two months subject to all the vile outrages of beastly drunken men, she came to the conclusion that she would never make a profitable subject of such a timid, shrinking creature, and sent the intelligence of the young girl's whereabouts to one of the Lord's earth angels, who, by the way, had so ministered reproofs to the woman as to inspire her with the thought that this servant of the Lord needed but to know of the sad condition of the poor girl to come to her rescue. This dear servant of the Lord Jesus had incidentally, or rather providentially, met me at my first starting out in interest of the founding of the Benedict Home, and no sooner received this intelligence than she conveyed it to me with the inquery, "What has been your success in the work, and what can you do with the case?" describing it as above. Her letter, like all others of the kind, was not allowed to lay over one mail without an answer and received a favorable reply. She, with another like interested servant of our Master, set about the necessary preliminaries of the young girl's clothing, money for her fare, and part, at least, of what would pay her expenses in the Retreat was arranged for. One of the good sisters accompanied her part of the distance, and one of the

Digitized by Google

dear girls sheltered in the Retreat met her part way and she was soon safe in the fold, where in the course of a few months in the hands of kind nurses, under the direction of a skillful physician, health was again restored; but what can ever blot out the recollection of that two months in that pit of destruction which, than all others, seems to come nearest to the one ever described as bottomless.

To these real life pictures I would call the attention of those very nice Christian ladies who criticised "Mother Benedict" for having opened such a refuge for such a purpose saying, "Young girls will part with their virtue cheaper if they know that a Christian woman like you will give them shelter in the hour of their extremity."

Dear reader, the calamity that thus overtakes these erring ones is not planned for, and so far the experience of the Home and Retreat has been that the unfortunates had never heard of either until the great problem was to be solved of, "Where can I find shelter?"

Had the young girl last mentioned have had a knowledge of the Retreat, or met some kind hand to guide her there, of what countless value it would have been to her. And of what value, too, would have been a knowledge of and shelter in the Retreat to the eight young girls whom she found and left in that sink of iniquity who said: "We came here just as you did, only for shelter, but now for us there seems no hope."

How has the necessity of educating our daughters to be self-sustaining been emphasized in my experience as I have found those who had been reared in ease and luxury, where every want was met without either the mental or physical, being called into action until, by some reverse of fortune, they find themselves entirely dependent on their own resources without the slightest knowledge of how to apply themselves. I can never forget, while reason holds her seat, the despairing helplessness of some of these real life characters held in bondage subject to man's lust for their daily bread. A special character among these comes to my remembrance just

Digitized by Google

now, in whose sad narrative the alarm is sounded of the danger that comes through this listless indolence. Reared in her father's house in this state of dependence on other's thought and action, what could be expected of her but that as she was led to the altar, that she would be the same listless, helpless wife and mother in her own home as she had been a daughter in her father's. Daughters of such rearing are not only expensive articles on their father's hands, but in their married relations this expense being passed over to the husband, causes him to have to apply himself to business early and late, thus giving little leisure to accompany his young wife to the various places of entertainment and pastime which those so morbidlv reared are ever craving, and thus giving rise to the dissatisfaction and whining complaints on the part of the wife who has not the ability to count the cost, and is alike ignorant of the effort and close application on the part of the husband to meet her unnecessary demands.

This well nigh tells the story of the wrecked yet beautiful woman to whom I have referred, as she narrated her sad story. Married while quite young, her husband applying himself early and late to business, leaving her to the society of gentlemen of leisure, which soon gave rise to suspicions of unfaithfulness, which resulted in divorce, the husband gathering up his little ones and returning to England from whence they came, the helpless victim of ease and luxury being left now to make her own way in the world without the slightest knowledge of how to do it. "There was but one thing," she said, "that I thought I knew how to do, and that was to teach music; but with a blurred name I found that no one would commit their daughters to me for instruction. So, leaving the city where I was known, I sought, where I was not known, for employment in the only thing that I could do, but, failing of success, out of means, and among strangers, I was obliged to sell myself for bread." This interview with this fallen one was in a house of ill-fame in Burlington, the then headquarters of a procurist from one of our mining cities of the west

Digitized by Google

who was gathering up recruits for her bagnio, holding out such flattering inducements to victims whom she was leading on to soul and body destruction, that the number she sought was now nearly filled, ranging from the ignorant, uncultured girl of fourteen, to the accomplished, deserted wife that stood before me. I could easily see that this beautiful woman was counted of great value to the procurist, as she watched us so closely and at times joined in the conversation in a way to attract the attention of her valued victim from any offer I could make her of stepping stones up and out of her terrible life. As I proffered her the privilege of shelter in the Home and the opportunity of being educated in useful employments, how ready was this procurist to throw in words of discouragement of her being able to do any kind of work. Notwithstanding her presence and all the counterbalancing influence she could throw in, arrangements were made by which I was to call for the unhappy victim of vice the next day and accompany her to the Home.

But calling at the hour appointed, the one I sought was nowhere to be found, all sorts of excuses being made for her non-appearance, all of which to me were false statements, so I could but take my leave believing all the time that she who the day before was so ready to take the first step toward a higher and better life, was drugged and hid away somewhere. I applied to the mayor of the city whose headquarters were but a few steps away. He only complained of the inaction of the sheriff and other officers. They, in turn, placed the fault on him. So men elected to execute the law resorting to every dodge to hinder its execution, there remained nothing for me to do but to pass on, leaving not only that poor victim but scores of others to go on and down as though there were no law, no authority in our land to come to their relief. Although this bit of experience came to me in the early part of my work ere we had obtained our present law prohibiting houses of ill-fame, yet we had sufficient law at that time to have punished that procurest had those in office been of the

Digitized by Google

high moral standing that the average woman would have cast her vote for had she had the privilege. While it may be truly said of too many women that they are giving too much of their time and thought to fashion and the pastimes of the day to have leisure left to post themselves on the many intricate matters that pertain to government, the women are few who are not able to discern the fitness of a man for office as regards the moral question. And just here I can but express my surprise that all women interested in lifting higher the standard of purity, do not see just where the work is crippled by women not having a voice at the ballot-box, for that will tell as to who shall be our justices of the peace, county attorney and sheriff. I mention these officers more particularly, as it is with these that I come in contact in every attempt at enforcing the law, which, I am often taunted, even by good women, for not resorting to oftener. Toward such of these as are too listless and indifferent as to care to inform themselves so as to be able to cast an intelligent vote, and too delicate to cast it, I can but feel something akin to a righteous indignation, for they are aiders to the class of men who are barring us from our rights, and from which class come the officers who in one way or other defeat the purpose of all good laws. My conviction, too, ever having been that just as sure as right is right, we women should stand side by side with men at the polls, in all matters that pertain to the laws that govern us, and we shall just as soon as women *en masse* demand it.

THE LAW "MOTHER BENEDICT" OBTAINED FOR IOWA, AND ITS EFFECT UPON THE BORDER STATES.

In the revised Code of 1888, commencing at the bottom of page 1553, and continued on page 1554, are the following acts:

"If any person entice back into a life of shame any person who has heretofore been guilty of the crime of prostitution; or who shall inveigle or entice any female, before reputed virtuous, to a house of ill-fame, or knowingly conceal or assist, or abet in concealing such female, so deluded

Digitized by Google

or enticed for the purpose of prostitution or lewdness, he shall be punished by imprisonment in the penitentiary not less than three nor more than ten years."

PENALTY FOR PROSTITUTION.

"If any person for the purpose of prostitution or lewdness resorts to, uses, occupies or inhabits any house of ill-fame, or place kept for such purpose, or if any person be found at any hotel, boarding house, cigar store or other place, leading a life of prostitution and lewdness, such person shall be punished by imprisonment in the penitentiary not more than five years."

EVIDENCE NECESSARY TO CONVICT.

"The State, upon the trial of any person indicted for keeping a house of ill-fame, may, for the purpose of establishing the character of the house kept by defendant, introduce evidence of the general reputation of such house as so kept, and such evidence shall be competent for such purpose."

While I was rejoicing, as, from city to city, I found vacant buildings, or respectable occupants where I had been wont to find those soul and body destroying institutions, I was little dreaming of the terrible results that came to virtue-loving, vice-hating occupants of the border states. While I had not been without thinking of what the result was likely to be, knowing that in one of our river cities at least ten houses of ill-fame were vacated at once as the act of the Twentieth General Assembly became effective law. Yet I did not cross our border rivers and see for myself what had happened to cities, small or great, until late in the autumn of 1891, while lecturing in the interest of social purity, in Sioux City, I was solicited by interested parties to go over into Covington and undertake the rescue of one of those unfortunate ones.

After having been a visitor of dens of infamy throughout the length and breadth of Iowa, it might easily be supposed that there were no depths of those pits of vice with which my eye had not become familiar, yet I found that Covington had depths to reveal beyond anything that had before come to my knowledge, crowded, as it was, with those who had fled the law of Iowa.

Digitized by Google

We crossed the pontoon bridge, one of the wealthy ladies of the city having volunteered to take me in her carriage. Imagine a large proud stepping horse on a bridge barely wide enough for teams to pass, and only one small wire stretched on either side to prevent the slightest refractory movement of the animal from precipitating the carriage and riders into the muddy waters of the Missouri, or rather "Big Muddy" as it is significantly called. The traveler is stopped to pay his toll just where the muddy waters run swiftest and most suggestive of bearing the frail structure from beneath him or him with it, on to where it loses itself in the "Father of Waters." This ordeal passed and we are once more safe so far as solid foundation is concerned. The quaking bridge, the turbid river, the island midway between its banks, the rag pickers rummaging where all the debris of the city is deposited, form a picture never to be forgotten, yet one that does not compare with that which was beyond to be revealed as I entered the saloon and brothel combined, designated to me as where I would find the object of my search.

Entering, there stood a man at the bar pouring out the soul and body destroying liquid that must have had its origin first in the intelligence of the Prince of Devils ere it because the potent agent that it is in the destruction of man created in the image of God, and of woman the crowning excellence and finishing touch of His handiwork in this world of ours.

But partly curtained off from the saloon in front was a brothel in the background, where, moving to the sound of the piano in the wild hilarious dance, were those marred images of their Creator of both sexes already too far under the influence of the maddening bowl to listen with intelligent judgment, yet with enough of the sense of manhood and womanhood in them to pause in their dance as I approached and began to address them. But quickly divining that my purpose was to snatch those of my own sex from their bondage to men's lust, they were quickly rushed to the bar where the agent from the pit

Digitized by Google

poured out the flowing glasses which, when quaffed, would place them, in a very little time, in a condition where nothing said could at all effect them. Yet all were able for a little time to listen, and gathered close around me. One poor fellow already too drunk to more than stumble along, came up, not forgetting his manners, saying as he passed before me making his way to a seat, as he was illy able to stand, "Ex-excuse me, a-madam, I, I, came to meeting." After listening for a moment, another half intoxicated fellow said, "Girls, you had better listen to the sister. She is all right. Let us take up a collection." Suiting the action to the word, he thrust his hand into his pocket and handed me a quarter which I accepted and soon found use for, as my attention was soon arrested by a little girl of twelve appearing on the scene. The presence of the child in such a place was so all absorbing as to call my thought away from those who were already so far gone and to fix them on the rescue of the child. I immediately asked, "How came this little girl here? Has she a mother, and, if so, where is she?" to which the keeper a woman replied, "She is working here. And she has a mother who lives just down here in the brush." Then turning to the little girl, she said, "You had better put on your bonnet and go and show the lady where your mother lives. "Glad to follow, while the child led the way, she was placed in the carriage of the dear Christian lady who had waited outside and wept while I talked to the revelers within. Following the child's directions, we soon came to what had the appearance to us of a low old fashioned mud oven on a large scale. Passing half way around, I found an opening, the entrance to which was suggestive of a beaver's slide. Not attempting to make my way down, the wretched mother of the squalid abode responded to my call and came out. I presented her child and plead the necessity of her forbidding her ever again to enter the terrible abode of vice where I found her. The mother plead their poverty; her own ill health, the hand of consumption having her so in its grasp that bleeding at the lungs was of frequent

Digitized by Google

occurrence. To this, add prospective motherhood, with a baby then in her arms, and the story of the feeble health of her husband who, she said, was suffering so with rheumatism that he could do but little toward their support which made it necessary that the child should earn something. She could get two dollars a week for her services in that sink of iniquity, while in places of respectability a child like her could scarcely earn a dollar. Again the wealthy lady of the city wept while I talked and handed over the quarter I had received in the brothel, promising the poor mother that if she would but keep her child away from that vicious haunt, the ladies of Sioux City would surely come to her relief, and assist her in clothing not only her twelve year old daughter, but would also provide her something for the little one and the one yet unborn. This promise made in faith, was soon verified by the wealthy lady being out on her mission gathering up the supplies to meet the wants of the most squalid poverty my eyes had ever rested upon.

This has only described one saloon of Covington with its attractions of the fair and fallen ones, and but one of the wretched abodes of poverty that are the inevitable ultimate of the existence of the saloon in any community. Multiply this by three fourths of the domiciles of the city and you have Covington, so nearly given over to the saloon and brothel that insurance men refuse any longer to take any risks in it, and virtuous citizens regret ever having invested a dollar there. As we women always have the worst of it, I will tell the story of one Christian woman, at least, who, with her husband, had made Covington their home in its better days ere they dreamed that it would be swallowed up by vice. They had planned their own Eden. A cottage reared to their own taste where fruit and flowers needed but the touch of cultivation for they sprang almost spontaneously from the fertile soil. Trees planted by their own hands had grown to yield a lovely shade; and they were sure that the well they had digged yielded purer water than any fountain for miles around. Interested above all

Digitized by Google

things, in the cause of Christ on earth, they had borne their share in the erection of a church overshadowed by a grove of their own planting. The ground around the church was as carefully watched over as their own until about them, in the summer season, were beds of flowers or a carpet of green. Secure and unmolested they dwelt and worshipped there.

But how were their Eden joys broken in upon as the law prohibiting the brothel began to take effect in Iowa? First. By the intelligence that one of the most notorious keepers of a house of ill-fame in Sioux City was negotiating for property not more than a block away from them, on conditions that the owner would secure her license to sell liquor in connection with her bagnio. This, the dear, good woman whose story I am telling, remonstrated against with all the power that woman has, simply to plead with man. But all in vain. The license was secured and the purchase made, and the first house of ill-fame was thoroughly established in the hitherto peaceful little village of Covington. But it was soon followed by another and another as the pressure of Iowa's laws came down upon those institutions of evil in Sioux City, until, especially on the Sabbath day, at every crossing and re-crossing of the ferry boat men were transferred by the hundred to Covington and back, crowding upon and invading the sacred grounds not only of the heroine of this story, but also those of the church; spreading even their gambling tables beneath the shade of the grove hitherto so sacred to peace and purity, desecrating even the doorstep of the church with their kegs of beer until it became no longer bearable. Amid all this the dear Christian sister struggled to maintain her rights until the partner of her life, who would have been her defender could he have had health, sank so low that he could no longer endure even the sound of their reveling and she was forced to yield the ground to their desecration and bear her sick husband away to rented rooms in a neighboring city, where she watched over him until the end came and she laid him away in his last resting place.

Digitized by Google

A few months later, providentially, I met her; grown so weary of the awful consequences of the presence of the saloon and brothel, that she was very ready to proffer her services as a donation to the rescue work, and, during the winter just past, has borne and is still bearing the burden of the Retreat with me, thus making it possible for the pages of this book to be written.

Dear reader, I anticipate your sympathy is stirred for this dear Christian sister. Her eden home is destroyed; her property rendered almost valueless by the rule of rum and the reign of vice which it engenders, turning the once pure hamlet into such a representation of the bottomless pit as to bar even the thought of any virtuous man or woman from purchasing a home there. But what was the part she had to bear compared with that of a wife with a husband not strong enough to withstand the temptation to the saloon or the brothel? Or what was her suffering compared with a mother's with sons to be lured into those vicious dens, to be robbed of their virtue in their boyhood, and she left to see them grow up but to add to the host of vicious manhood, who would make and execute law only in favor of evil? Do you wonder, dear reader, that she and I, although having so nearly accomplished our three score years and ten, are planning, she for work with the legislature in Nebraska, to secure a law placing a penalty on those twin vices in her State, and I planning to move the legislature of Iowa to give to our women a compulsory reformatory, that we may have a place suited to the reformation of those of our own sex who have fallen so low, where Christian women can care for them, and lead them back to virtuous life rather than drive them from our State across the rivers to blight and blast the hamlets or cities on the opposite shores. These are our plannings, and as it pleaseth Him who hath hitherto been our helper to give us still farther length of days and ability to labor, we shall be heard from. Our lives are pledged to the uplifting of woman the crowning excellence of God's creation from the pit from which man has lured her,

Digitized by Google

and woman's mistaken sense of justice hath helped to hold her.

> "A thorn hath pierced me.
> So roses must be near,"

Has long been one of my mottoes, so surely has each special trial been followed by a special blessing, and as "all natures, difference keeps all natures peace." so out of all these piercing trials and grievious hindrances are coming, the lengthening of our cords, and strengthening of our stakes, in this work of woman for her sister woman. And with me one thing stands sure that while I have had to run against sharp thorns in pressing this department in the W. C. T. U. of Iowa, yet in no other soil could it have grown so rapidly or taken so deep root and that "what is can spread, stand for good as well as evil," so from Iowa has gone out the seed thought and other state W. C. T. U.'s have taken up the work and are going on establishing Homes for their fallen.

Colorado W. C. T. U. has a flourishing Home brought into being by the untirng labors of dear Sister Beach that was so thoroughly worked out on the plan of the little woman of Iowa, that she wrote me for every particular in regard to how to commence and carry on the work, even to what her salary should to be. To this I replied,—"Not a dollar. Thou must be able to say in the sacred desk, on the platform, and to individuals, aside from just so much as will keep me alive and in the field, every dollar I receive goes directly toward the building and sustaining of a refuge for these outcast and unfortunate ones."

Although this stepping out beyond the direction of our executives brought me continued trials, and most especially so in my attempt to grade the girls by founding the Retreat, yet in the midst of the thorns, the roses are growing, and I am now and then receiving a fresh bouquet. When the dear sister, who was one of my warmest friends in my work for the Home, said on my commencing the work for the Retreat, "You have taken yourself out of the Lord's hands and out of

Digitized by Google

His service," it pierced me sore, but now she is one of the Retreat's warmest friends, oft and again, aiding and sending words of cheer to the tired little worker. So with many who were not so out spoken, but then thought not with me, yet now are warm supporters of the Retreat. And there are other roses among the thorns from which hope assures a heart-solacing perfume. Among those whom hope assures, and my heart yearns for, is dear Sister Hinman. She always voted for what I wanted and was so very good to me while I was working for the Home. This made me feel the thorn all the more keenly as she charged me with dishonesty when I commenced the work for the Retreat. But in memory of her kindness in the past, I will hope for the future; not forgetting the kindness of Mr. Hinman as he selected and sent down to the Home one of his best cows, just for my telling him the story of the old Friend who was persuaded that he had a cow in his pasture that the Lord wanted for the benefit of an orphans' home in my native State. And so he selected one of his best cows and drove it to the Home, accompanied by a wagon load of provisions.

There are others too numerous to mention, who I hope will come to recognize the work of the Retreat as only a part of what I first started out to do, as they remember that they had grave doubts over the Home's success at the first, but now most heartily endorse it, and I trust they will yet conclude that Mother Benedict was right in building both the Home and the Retreat.

Coming to the Home for a few days rest the matron, among other reports as to what had transpired during my absence, handed me a letter so unlike the usual letters that came begging our shelter and pity that while each appeal moved us to sympathy this one so expressed the extreme agony of the writer as to lead me to fear that the longing for sympathy of that sad heart had not been met in the response of the secretary of the Board so as to bring the wounded one to the shelter of the fold. Several days having elapsed and no farther tid-

Digitized by Google

ings come from the very sorrowful applicant, I wrote her as tenderly as I was capable of and was soon responded to by the arrival of the grief stricken girl whose every appearance witnessed that she had been reared in cultured society, and nature too had lavished on her both beauty and talent beyond the average. I thought reading her letter had stirred my heart to its inmost, but when I stood face to face with the dear girl as she entered the Home I found there sad depths yet to be stirred, and as I learned more and more of her sad story my interest and sympathy continued to broaden and deepen until it was hard to conceal the fact that in my estimation she stood far above the average girl, and that in making her acquaintance a new revelation had come to me and the necessity of grading our girls became a fixed purpose.

While the newcomer stood in need of the shelter of the Home and all the love and tenderness that we could bestow, yet I could see no reason for her signing an agreement to stay for reformation, all her bearing being equal or above the average young lady in the best ordered families. I will not attempt to more than give a glimpse of all that she had to endure, as the prevailing feeling with the ladies in charge of the Home was that it was their duty to make her realize that they regarded her on a level with the lowest. But this proved an admirable failure with the matron and her assistant at least, for with them she so completely won her way that she could not have been regarded with more tenderness by the matron if she had been her own daughter or by the assistant had she been her born sister.

As they came to know her story they saw as I did that she was not guilty concerning the firey trial through which she had to pass, all the sin resting on the monster in human form who could and did make his escape to parts unknown.

Here I must pause and give a word of warning to those under whose care young girls may be placed, and in this word of warning I want to take in the girls as well, who are out at service, saying to all who have them in any way in their

Digitized by Google

charge, "never leave them alone with any man." I say this with all deference to truly virtuous men, but facts have proven that the man whom you would least suspect is often times least worthy of your trust. As witnesseth the statement of a lawyer who entered the Retreat to secure shelter for an unfortunate: "I was perfectly astounded," said he, "when that old high professor came to me for assistance in settling the difficulty between him and his victim; I had always looked up to him as a father in the church and could not have been persuaded to believe him guilty of such a crime save on his own confession."

With like experiences multiplied many times, again I pray you heed my warning, for it comes from the depths of the agony with which I have had to mingle.

As I have gone on in the rescue work, many have been the occurrences that call forth this charge to those who have the care of girls. And to the girls themselves, I want most emphatically to say never allow yourselves to be alone with any man no matter what his age or standing in society may be. Positively decline all lone walks and lone drives and most positively of all, lone midnight hours.

Returning again to the one whose story I was telling, who was most tenderly guarded until in her early teens she was bereft of her father, and one circumstance after another made it necessary for her to earn her own way which she was nobly doing, and the youth to whom her heart had been pledged in her school days, was winning his way as a business man in one of our territories, while the tender messages were ever telling of the joys of their prospective Eden when a competence was gained. She, in turn, was doing her part by improving every spare moment in fashioning the various articles for convenience and beauty that it was in her power to do, to add to its comfort and charms, when to her unutterable distress the letters so full of love and hope that she was wont to receive failed to come. It was my privilege to see those sacred treasures as she had them so carefully filed away. They bore no

Digitized by Google

trace of growing coldness, the last one anticipating the time very near when he would come to claim her as his bride. It was while struggling to bear up under this suspense and great weight of sorrow that she met the gentlemanly appearing monster who perpetrated the deed more foul than would have been her murder. From this time every ray of light on her future pathway was turned to midnight gloom. The lingering hope that the idol of her heart was only testing her love for him by his long silence was now changed to mortal fear lest he should ever know what had befallen her.

Where could she hide from his knowledge and from that of all who had ever known her, was the question? Struggling to add a little more to the pittance she had in bank to meet her coming wants, she was making her way among strangers as an agent for a medical firm, when one morning at her boarding place, as she lifted her plate at breakfast, she found a note reading, "I perceive you are in trouble; is there anything I can do to help you?" signed by one of the gentlemen boarders. Her misery was now complete; suspected, plans for death rather than life, now came as her only refuge, not for the life of the unborn as so many are tempted, but for her own. The water of the beautiful lake near by was suggested by the grand enemy as the surest and easiest way of escape from a life more terrible than death, and urged that her suffering would only be increased by delay. In this mortal agony, she resolved to wait only for the darkness of the coming night. The longed for shadows fell and as the guests were retiring for the night, she, too went to her room, not to sleep, but to leave the house by a back stairway, down which she stealthily crept and made her way to the margin of the lake. As she stood contemplating the awful deed and was about to make the fatal plunge, suddenly there was a firm hand laid on her shoulder, and recovering from the shock, she recognized the gentleman who, by his note, had proffered any assistance that he could give her. "What," said he, "are you about to do? Come, go back to your boarding place. I

Digitized by Google

wish you could meet Mother Benedict." Here, she said, hope revived, for she had heard me lecture. Yielding to the so very positive demand, she returued to her room and wrote the deeply impressive letter that so stirred my heart.

Was it only incidental or was it providential that the gentleman caught a glimpse of her as she came around to the front of the house and passed out the gate? This strange movement added to his previous suspicion caused him to deem it right to follow in the distance until he was satisfied of the desperate plunge she was about to take.

It was my privilege some months later to make the acquaintance of this good Samaritan as I was met in the street in my home city by a very fine looking gentleman who accosted me with, "You are Mrs. Benedict, I believe." On my assuring him that he was right in his belief, he said, "I am Mr. ——— and I want to talk with you. When and where can I have an opportunity?" I replied. "At my own house and thou mayest if thou pleasest walk around with me just now."

He accepted my invitation and taking the parcels that I was carrying began at once to inquire after the subject of my story, saying, "I am so anxious to know what became of her as I have learned nothing since a stern letter from one of the ladies in charge of the Home admonished me that from there she was not allowed to answer my letter or that from any gentleman." I replied, "I am happy to say that although the dear girl lingered long at death's door she has well-nigh regained her usual strength and so high is my estimation of her that I have chosen her as my assistant in the refuge that I am about to open in my own house for the class of unfortunates who like herself need only to be sheltered until the dark cloud that overshadows them has passed. When by their talents and industry they are able to make their own way in the world, even with their babies in their arms, and this dear girl is clinging to hers with such maternal fondness that she is determined to make her way with it, and I am as determined to help her what I can." The interview closed

Digitized by Google

by the interested gentleman adding ten dollars to my scanty store.

This I soon found use for in paying her fare from Des Moines to the Retreat. She had waited in vain for what she had in the bank. Her sister, in whom she had the utmost confidence, having possession of her certificate of deposit, after a long delay, wrote her that she could not send her money, as she had drawn it from the bank some time previous, and her husband had used it in paying his harvest hands and refused to refund it, and gave like flimsy excuses for not sending furniture and clothing that were in her possession. All this the dear girl stood with Christian fortitude. She had given her heart to the Lord while in the Home, and, steadily holding on by faith was doing the best she could, and by her Christian example was of great value to me in the Retreat until her dear baby (on whose account she was suffering such treatment from her sister) was taken sick, and despite the tenderest care, went down to a mere skeleton and hung to life by the slenderest thread for so very long that her faith at times gave way and despair well nigh took its place. One circumstance of cruelty on the part of her sister I will never forget. While we were watching over baby, expecting death at any time, the young mother not having anything suitable to wear on the funeral occasion that we thought inevitable, wrote her sister telling her of the prospective death of her darling and begged that she send her just one of her dresses that she left with her, suited to the sad occasion. Soon after, to our great satisfaction a large satchel came.

We were both bending over the little sufferer at the time, but as it was handed in by the expressman the dear girl took it from his hand and stepping into an adjoining room opened it with all expectation of finding the much needed article, but as her eye fell on the contents I saw all too plainly in the deepened expression of agony which passed over her face that she must have received another thrust from the sister whom she so tenderly loved and who had as tenderly loved her until

Digitized by Google

her trial came, and then still gave to her a sort of tolerance until she failed to make the young mother relinquish her child. On this occasion she improved the opportunity of wounding her sad heart afresh by sending a white lace dress made over blue silicia for an amatuer performance instead of one suited to the sad occasion that to all human appearance was sure to come. But in the kind providence of our Father in Heaven the impending blow was averted and the little treasure came slowly back to health, and with the returning bloom to his cheek came joy to the heart of this mother. But her joy was of short duration. The thing she so much feared was at hand. A letter came from her sister saying, "Young ——— wants your address as he wishes to break the long silence, renewing his old claim on you." Nothing could have wounded her deeper, save it was that which came soon after, as evidently her sister all unbidden had sent her address to him whom she had loved from her very childhood, but now, from whose knowledge she desired forever to keep concealed. From this hour she was inconsolable. Here was the old familiar hand telling again of the love that was wont to send such a thrill of joy to her heart. What was she to do? To keep silent or to respond were alike worse than death and had it not been for her dear little baby boy who so needed her care it seems quite certain that death would have been chosen.

All the power that I possessed to soothe, comfort and guide was again called into action and despite all, there was a continual fear as I lay down at night of what might happen before the dawn of another day. I at last persuaded her that nothing could be worse than what she was now suffering, so it was best to write and tell him all. But oh, the awful task. How many times were hours spent 'mid sighs and tears in writing the terrible story which was only to be burned when written. All this time sleep was never sound enough to cause entire forgetfulness, so that in her sleeping hours her groans were enough to pierce the hardest heart. Love at length triumphed over all, and a letter was mailed telling the

Digitized by Google

awful story; but oh, with what suspense she waited the reply. But she did not have to wait long ere an answer came full of sympathy for her, and threatening the life of her worse than murderer, with deprecations on himself for the unfaithful part he had played, and promises for future fidelity. What could he say more? Joy now filled the young heart where sorrow so long had reigned supreme.

Arrangements were soon made for the long delayed marriage, when a letter came saying, "You will have to place that baby in some good family, for our people would be shocked to see us with a baby." In reply to this she made the most touching appeal—one that seemed to me sufficient to melt a heart of stone. One expression of this appeal I will pen: "Could you trust me, that I would be a true mother to the little ones that might come to us if I should undo the little arms of this one from about my neck and pass him into the hands of strangers?" This and all else that letter contained failed to melt his heart for again he failed to reply, and so as the days and weeks went by the sorrow of that young heart grew so intense as to in a measure dethrone reason, while my prayer were, if possible, as intense as her sorrow, asking for some way to open for her to escape from such almost unbearable anguish which was telling rapidly on her strength and mine and unfitting us for the care and sympathy due to other afflicted ones who had come to us for shelter in time of need. I shall never be able to tell with pen or tongue of the relief that came in answer to fervent prayer through the offer of a situation by a kind lady who would not only pay good wages but what was best of all would allow her to take her darling baby with her. This so very rare offer was gladly accepted and among strangers she assumed the responsible duties of superintendent of a first-class boarding house. Her noble bearing, exquisite neatness and order could not fail to attract attention, and soon one of the gentleman boarders began to picture to himself a home so tastefully arranged, and later on outbid her kind employer, for he offered both heart and hand

Digitized by Google

and a home which in partnership with him she might call her own.

And as the years pass by I think of her with loving tenderness, and I trust she thus remembers me. But we dare not correspond for in order to gain the situation proffered her, she had to pass as a widow, and although the happy man, who is blessed with such a good and true wife, knows all her sad story, those in high life with whom they mingle do not know, and I can see no reason why they should.

Dear reader, thou hast the simple, unvarnished story. I ask could she have fought this battle alone, unaided by Christian counsel and the shelter of a Christian home? The thousands who have gone on and down without the needed aid, answer back—"She could not, and we too might have been saved, but were not."

Ere I close "Woman's Work for Woman" I feel that I shall fail of doing my whole duty without calling especial attention to our sisters, the Chinese women, brought to our land on purpose to be sold to the abuse of the worst passions of men. I know our government says they shall not come, but legislate against them as we will they are here by the thousands. Yes, tens of thousands. And concerning them I want in a few words to say the things I have so longed for opportunity to say in foreign missionary meetings. Placing myself in the Chinese woman's stead it would be hard for me to understand the foreign nation that would send its missionaries so far at so great an expense to Christianize me while the women of my nationality have crossed the broad expanse of water and come to the very doors of the foreign missionary societies only to be driven back to the over-peopled heathen land from whence they came, or if allowed to remain to whom so little attention is being paid to their Christianization. I think this will be met by the argument, "They are hard of access. We are doing what we can for them." To this I reply, I have a plan by which they would be easy of access, for they would be com-

Digitized by Google

pletely in our power. Give to the States where they are located the law that Iowa boasts, making prostitution a penitentiary offense and they would be criminals in the eyes of the law and as such could be taken from the hands of the wicked men who hold them in such vile servitude. But I hear the query, "What would the State do with so many of them?" I answer, it would be cheaper for the State to support them than to allow them to be supported on our soil in the vicious life they now lead. The State once holding them as criminals what a field would be opened for the foreign missionary work? One that would tell more rapidly in Christianizing China than all that ever can be done by sending our American women where by the time they have mastered the language their health will be so impaired as to leave but little strength for the work they are making such sacrifices to accomplish. How many precious lives have been made an early sacrifice in foreign lands that might have been saved to a long life of service for the Master had their attention been called to what might be done for Chinese women by Christianizing the China woman who has landed on our own shores? By freeing her from her bondage, lifting her from the depths of her degradation, giving to her the messages of the gospel and sending her back to her native land a living witness of the power and benefits of the gospel in changing the degraded heathen slave into a free woman in Christ equipped with knowledge and power to minister not only to the degraded class from whence she came, but equal also to the work of entering the darkened Zenana homes bearing the healing balm to both soul and body.

The Chinese woman transformed by the power of the gospel would have so many advantages. Her native climate, native tongue, and above all the testimony of the change wrought in her own being. Cannot this be done?

Cannot those low degraded women on our Pacific coast be so changed? To say they cannot would be a direct argument against sending missionaries to China. An argument the devotee of the foreign work would not wish to make.

Digitized by Google

One more thought, and though least of all, it is worthy of consideration. This thought relates to the finances. The cost of supporting the American missionary in China is doubtless double that of the native woman.

Last of all I would call attention to the blessed work we would be doing for our own land while Christianizing the heathen Chinese who have come to us, and sending them back a three-fold blessing to their own people.

CONCLUSION.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him."

Dear sisters of the local unions to whom I have gone weeping bearing the precious seed of the gospel of the Son of God concerning our duty to those seduced and fallen ones, I appeal to you in memory of your kind responses that helped to make it possible to carry out the plan for their rescue, that I then, and still believe, was given me of the Lord. It is not necessary for me to reiterate the story of the untiring, self-sacricing toil by which the refuge for these fallen ones came into being and into which, for a time, the outcasts were gathered, sheltered, reformed and returned to society "clothed and in their right minds." It is true that the Home and Retreat combined are not sufficient to hold all that should be gathered in, but they are a *means* to an end, and as we operate them on the grading plan, we shall succeed in educating men to the need of the compulsory reformatory for the abandoned class, and indeed for all women criminals. Therefore I do most earnestly beg that you will bear with me while I talk to you in regard to the damage that comes to the work for these fallen ones under the present management of the Home, because it is in your power to so change its management as to make it again the Home of blessing that it was in the past.

You that have heard me on this point will remember that my plan was not only to receive the sin-sick prostitute as she

Digitized by Google

sought the shelter of the Home, but to bring to bear both gospel and legal suasion on those who were not disposed to come, by first paying them a Christian visit offering them the shelter of the Home which, if they accepted, our purpose would be gained. But, if rejected, would render them far more liable to conviction when arrested. For it is only when we, their sisters, have done all in our power to reclaim them that men are willing to enforce law against them. For they know, as we also know, that no woman ever reforms in the penitentiary. Again, when once they are fairly in the hands of the authorities, pay them another kindly visit, telling them that you will secure suspension of action against them provided they will go to the Home and remain subject to its reformatory rules until they have given such evidence of thorough reformation as shall warrant an honorable discharge. I make this pleading with all the more confidence because of its having proved such a complete success in the past history of the Home that bears my name. And while I plead with you to remove the hindrances to the work that rob me of the rejoicing that for a time was such a blessed reward for all the years of toil, I would leave on record this my plan; no not my plan,but the plan given me from the Lord for the uprooting of the deadly upas of prostitution, for the benefit not only of the sisters of the Unions of this and other States, but not stopping here, through the grand army of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, would advertise to the world woman's power to deliver her fallen sister from the crushing heel of man's lust. The brothel once removed, our sons no longer reared under its baneful influence, the seduction of our daughters would soon be known only in the sad history of the past, and a grand step would be taken toward the glorious millennial day when the seed of the woman shall not only have bruised the serpent's head, but shall have utterly destroyed the works of the devil.

But, sisters, we have a great battle to fight ere this glorious victory is attained. Therefore, we cannot afford to rest on

Digitized by Google

our oars waiting for some fair breeze to waft to us this great deliverance. Great things are committed to the W. C. T. U. Great things are expected of us, and great things we can and will do, the Lord helping us. "He maketh a way where there is no way," is as true to-day as when it first found expression in the sacred Word. But He works by means and I am only asking you with me to simply be the means in His mighty hand to work out woman's freedom in every sense of the word. "If the Son therefore make you free ye shall be free indeed," was not alone addressed to man but applies to woman as well. But as in the spiritual, so in the temporal, there is a part for us to do. We must work out our own freedom. How important then that we occupy honorably all the ground that is open to us and watch for and improve every possibility of taking an advanced step. The evil that we are fighting on this line lies at the root of the depravity in man and has been the most potent factor in forging the fetters and framing the bars that bound and barred woman from her rightful freedom all the ages, and the farther we get from the influence of the Son of righteousness the deeper is the gloom that settles on the life of woman and the more abjectly is she the slave of man. Thus the problem is already solved that the Son of righteousness is on our side and we privileged to keep our eyes ever on our Great Captain and our ear attentive to His voice. Thus receiving our orders direct from the eternal throne, let us on to victory, dealing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with our God.

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

REPORT OF THE JOINT VISITING COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE LEGISLATURE TO VISIT THE BENEDICT HOME.

To the Twenty-first General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Your committee to visit Benedict Home and inquire as to the expenditure of an appropriation of $5,000 made that institution by the Twentieth General Assembly, begs leave to report they have visited said Home, situated just north of the limits of the city of Des Moines, and find it an institution established by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Iowa, for the reclamation and reformation of erring girls. The care of the property, nearly three acres of ground and a house of twenty-five rooms, closets, halls, and stairways, is in the hands of a Board of Trustees, three in number.

The management of the Home is in the care of a Board of Managers of seven, a Matron and Assistant Matron; all these amenable to the executive committee of the Women's Christion Temperance Union.

In our judgment, the money appropriated by the last Legislature could not have been more wisely and economically expended than it has been in the hands of the ladies having in charge the institution.

The $5,000 appropriated by the Twentieth General Assembly was to be used for the "enlargement and support" of the Home. We find $4,200 of this money has been expended in enlarging and repairing the building, the major part of this sum being used in the erection of an addition 40x36 feet, two stories, basement and attic, to the east of the building already on the premises.

Eight hundred dollars of the appropriation has been used for support of inmates. It is thus seen the money appropriated has been expended for the objects designated, and that there has been no diversion of money from the specified purposes for which it was appropriated.

The expenditure for enlargement was necessary for the comfort of inmates and for the care of the sick. The money used for support has but supplemented that raised by charitable contributions for this purpose during the past two years. The cost of support for the institution, under most careful management during that period, has been about $4,163, which has been contributed in money, clothing and provisions.

We find there is no indebtedness against the institution. The only paid employees in the institution are the Matron and Assistant, Mrs. M. A. Rogers and her daughter, who receive for their joint services $35 per month, board, rooms and lights.

The house is a comfortable one, well lighted, well ventilated, cleanly and neat, heated by furnace, approved by Mr. Finkbine, who was appointed by the Executive Council to inspect the building for their approval. Provision for escape from danger by fire is good, and the sanitary condition of the premises is excellent.

The number cared for in this Home, coming from all parts of the State during the biennnial period ending September 1, 1885, was 118. The

Digitized by Google

majority of the girls entering the Home are without parents or friends, and being early thrown upon their own resources for a livelihood, found employment at service in hotels and boarding-houses, where they were without protection. When misfortune overtook them, and all doors save those of disreputable houses were closed against them, that of the Home stood open to receive them.

We find upon investigation that results of the work of the institution in bettering the lives and conditions of those enjoying its benefits have been most satisfactory. Homes have been secured for the girls in leaving the institution, and they are in nearly all cases earning an honest livelihood and living correct lives. Good homes have also been found for the children whose mothers could not provide for them, thereby making it possible that they become good citizens.

We deem the institution one of the most commendable charities in the State. It provides a home for a class homeless, friendless, penniless and unprotected, who would inevitably drift into lives of crime and degradation, and swell the ranks of criminals, not only by their own presence, but by that of their progeny, save for the interposition of this Home. For here they are taught to do well, house work, laundry work dressmaking, plain sewing and nursing. They are brought under Christian influences, their moral nature strengthened and their spiritual welfare looked to; so that they go out better fitted to meet life's responsibilities. The institution undoubtedly saves to the State much that would most surely be expended in caring for these girls as criminals, were they left to drift further into sin's dark ways. Their helplessness in misfortune appeals to all. The expense of their support while being fitted to become self supporting should be equally borne by all. They can be cared for in this Home at less cost to the public than in any other place, and it is proper and right that the State supplement the money contributed by its citizens with an appropriation. The enlargement of the building makes is possible to care for more in the future than in the past, if only the means of support can be had. Therefore, we most earnestly recommend that an appropriation of $3,000 be made the Benedict Home by this General Assembly, though this is a much smaller sum than was recommended by Governor Sherman in his message; that its inmates may be cared for, and that its doors may be opened to more of those who are knocking for admission.

Respectfully submitted,

P. M. SUTTON,
Committee on part of Senate.

GEO. L. FINN,
JNO. H. KEATLEY,
Committee on part of House.

January, 1886.

Digitized by Google

MOTHER BENEDICT'S APPEAL TO THE TWENTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA.

WOMAN'S PLEA FOR WOMAN.

In behalf of the mothers of our State. we beg leave to address you as an honorable member of our Twentieth General Assembly, calling your attention to the rapid increase of prostitution, and to the vast number of houses of ill-fame kept open in all our cities, victimizing both our sons and daughters and not only bringing many to an untimely grave, but entailing on community disease that will inevitably go down to coming generations. This sad destruction and depravity had become such a burden to my heart as to lead me to pledge my life to the work of raising means of providing a home for the poor girls who were saying to me as I visited them in their awful abodes of vice: "We would gladly leave this life of shame if there was any refuge to which we could flee." This humane enterprise has been espoused by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and has been so far successful that we have located and for the past year and a half sustained, in our capital city, the Benedict Home for the prodigal daughters of Iowa. To this friendly institution so many soon came for shelter as to necessitate the enlarging of our accomodations, which we anticipate will have to be done again and again ere there is room for all, who will come as the dwellers in the pits of darkness throughout the State learn of the new lift that opens up to those who come under the benign influence of the Home, which is as its name designates, a home of blessing. To gather up and shelter these poor wrecks of womanhood is all that we, the mothers of Iowa, can do by way of remedy for this great evil.

Now, we appeal to the fathers, whom you will represent in our legislature, for provision for a class who will not come to us; some of these are so under the influence of strong drink that they have no power to escape, and there are others who boldly say: "We are in the business for the money there is in it, and it is our business and we are going to follow it. Men who pass as respectable visit us, and we are going to make as many new victims as we can." Which means that our boys are to be decoyed into these dens of soul and body thieves and there educated to the fiendish purpose of seducing our innocent daughters, and thus furnishing a successson of those fallen ones, who, though fallen, possess such power to destroy. Our petition presented to our last Legislature for a compulsory reformatory for those helpless and unwilling ones was so

Digitized by Google

favorably entertained by the committee to whom it was referred as to elicit the following report:

"Your joint committee on penitentiary at Fort Madison and at Anamosa, and reform school at Mitchellville, beg leave to report that they have had under consideration the numerous petitions presented to this house by the W. C. T. U., and report that there is much merit in the matter presented in said petitions, and in the opinion of the committee the time has fully come when the civilization and Christianity of the age demand that a separate prison shall be provided where females convicted of crime can be confined separate and apart from the prison where male convicts are incarcerated, and in connection therewith a reformatory school should be provided, to the end that as much as possible reformation of females therein confined may be attained. The committee point with pride to a prison of said character in Indiana, and believe that the State of Iowa cannot do better than at the earliest possible day to provide a similar reformatory prison. Your committee regret the fact that the session is so far advanced as to preclude any steps being taken at this time that would attain this desirable object, and your committee confidently believe that at an early day the Legislature of the State of Iowa will take proper steps and enact a law establishing an institution or prison of the kind referred to, which shall harmonize with the light and advancement of the age."

We also beg leave thus early in the session to call your attention to the necessity of so amending Sec. 4013 of the Code as to affix a greater penalty to the offense of keeping a house of ill-fame; and also to make prostitution a penal offense, so that poor victims of those haunts of vice may be committed to the reformatory for which we petition, and thus placed under circumstances the most favorable to their reformation; instead of fining and driving them from city to city, as is the provision and and custom of our municipal courts, which process only tends to deepen their depravity and to scatter broadcast the deadly evils which ever follow in their track.

Submitted in behalf of the mothers of Iowa,

LOVINA B. BENEDICT.

The above plea made by our representative, Mrs. L. B. Benedict, has our entire and cordial endorsement. We prayerfully hope that it may receive your careful consideration and favorable action.

MARY J. ALDRICH,
Pres. W. C. T. U. of Iowa.

J. ELLEN FOSTER,
Supt. Legislative Dept.

MRS. S. V. MAXFIELD,
Cor. Sec'y.

Digitized by Google

APPEAL TO THE TWENTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The following appeal to the Twenty-Fourth General Assembly seems also worthy of a place on these pages:

To the Honorable Twenty-Fourth General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

For forty years I have been deeply interested in the unfortunate of my own sex, and for the past twelve years have given myself to the labor of providing stepping stones by which the sin-sick prostitute might return to honorable womanhood, and a Christian shelter, for the young seduced girl in the hour of her great extremity that she might not be forced to seek shelter among those who are not only hopelessly down themselves, but who proffered her shelter with a view to adding her as one more recruit to the army of prostitution, already hundreds of thousands strong in our nation. The records of the Nineteenth and Twentieth General Assemblies show that petitions were presented and bills introduced with a view not only to a more stringent law in regard to the prostitute or prostitution of either sex, but a compulsory reformatory for women criminals under the care of women whose lives give evidence that their lives are filled with a measure of that love which drew the Son of God from heaven to earth to lay out his life for the redemption of the world. The Twentieth General Assembly so nobly responded to our appeal for more stringent law that in the House there were but two dissenting voices to the placing on our statutes the sections that make prostitution a penitentiary offense. While I labored in private and in public more than two years and lobbied through two Legislatures for this law, I did not design that any woman convicted of prostitution should ever be sent to the penitentiary where male prisoners are incarcerated. Being a woman, I have studied woman as she came from the hand of her Creator, the last finishing touch and the crowning excellence of His creation. And, reckoning from the standpoint of science or theology, a more refined being than man, arguing to my understanding, that no matter how low she has fallen she is a woman still, and in order to reform her she must be surrounded by circumstances suited to her reformation. History, too, proves that women do not reform in our penitentiaries where male prisoners are incarcerated. On the contrary, we have multiplied evidences of reformation where suitable reformatories have been

Digitized by Google

provided to which they have voluntarily fled or have been consigned by law. While we have in Iowa all the law necessary to convict this class of criminals we have, as yet, no place suitable for them. Neither is there any shelter to which the sin-sick prostitute can flee, save only as the door of the Retreat, under the management of "Mother Benedict," in Decorah, stands open to them. While she had any influence over the Benedict Home in Des Moines, they were admitted there with wonderful success as to their reformation, as we have many living witnesses, now leading honorable lives who were taken in at the door of that Home in the most hopeless and loathsome condition. As they gave themselves up to the reformatory influences of the Home, they were healed both mentally and physically and went out "clothed in their right mind." Now, in behalf of the mothers of Iowa, I appeal to you, the honorable fathers to whom is intrusted, during this Legislative session at least, the welfare of our State, praying that you aid us in our care of those seduced and erring girls by liberal appropriations both for the benefit of the Home in Des Moines and the Retreat in Decorah. The Retreat, all unaided by the State, has cared for many who were refused admittance at the door of the Home. But having well-nigh measured up my three score years and ten, I am no longer able to labor as in the past, when, from the proceeds of the lecture field, the Home in Des Moines was brought into existence and for a time sustained and to which source, and individual donations, the Retreat in Decorah owes much of its support, while over two hundred have been cared for who are a part of our commonwealth and are to effect it either for good or for evil. Of this number, we rejoice to state, there are but very few over whom we entertain fears for their future. But, on the contrary, we look for stronger and nobler womanhood from what they have suffered. With the presentation of these facts, we come to you with confidence that you will aid us in this work, and that you will legislate favorably to a compulsory department either on the grounds and in connection with the Benedict Home in Des Moines, or located in some other part of the State.

Respectfully submitted to you in behalf of the mothers of Iowa.

MRS. L. B. BENEDICT.

Digitized by Google

The following, printed and pasted on the back of the photographs of Mrs. Benedict sold for the benefit of the Home, will be remembered as a pleasant souvenir of those early days in the work:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."—MATT., 25, 30.

At the Annual Meeting of the W. C. T. U. of Iowa,

—HELD AT—

CLINTON, IOWA, OCTOBER, 1879,

with burdened heart and eloquent lips, revealing a God-given love and faith,

MRS. L. B. BENEDICT

came pleading, that through that organization she might accomplish her long-cherished purpose of establishing a *Home* for penitent, erring women, desirous of returning to the paths of rectitude; and for whom neither the State nor private benevolence had provided such a refuge and help. She was appointed "Sup't of Work for Erring Women," and commenced soliciting funds, with which to build.

God blessed her work, gave her access to the hearts of the people, whose pledges of money so cheerfully given, increased the faith of her co-workers, and in January, 1882, the Iowa W. C. T. U. became incorporated, and purchased a very desirable property in the suburbs of Des Moines, providentially offered them. The place was repaired, furnished and opened for the reception of inmates in August, 1882, and in recognition of Mrs. Benedict's persevering faith and assiduous labors, whose only compensation has been her joy in the fulfillment of a Christ-like desire to help "seek and save the lost," this charitable institution has been called

THE BENEDICT HOME.

As the name implies, it has proved a "*house of blessing*" to those who have there sought shelter, help and Christian counsel.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google